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ABSTRACT

Nearly a decade after ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), more information is needed about how it is being used to advance children's rights. The Yemen CRC Impact Study is part of the International CRC Impact Study, a project of Radda Barnen/Swedish Save the Children. The study's focus is on how and whether the Yemeni governmental and non-governmental organizations, international non-government organizations, media, research institutions, United Nations agencies, and others are changing their programming and policies in response to the CRC. Data were gathered through interviews, report and record analysis, and a survey of donor organizations. The findings indicated that there has been a modest effect of the CRC in Yemen. Institution-building and the effectiveness of programs related to the CRC are proceeding in a positive direction, but not in an even, organized, or rapid fashion. Government institutions chosen to further CRC implementation are under-resourced, have low credibility, and are not high enough in the organizational hierarchy to make real impact. For both governmental and non-governmental organizations, sustained attention is needed to essential tasks of the CRC implementation process. UNICEF has worked primarily from a basic needs perceptive until 1997 and is now developing a rights perspective, whereas Radda Barnen has acted as a catalyst to encourage governmental and non-governmental organizations to work toward CRC implementation. The recommendations from the study concentrate on institution-building rather than implementation of specific articles of the CRC, and attempt to target present weaknesses in Yemeni institutional capacity. (KB)

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Impact of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Yemen

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25 August 1998

Yemen Study Is A Part of the Convention on the Rights of the Child Impact Study
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The International Convention on the Rights of the Child Impact Study

The Yemen Convention on the Rights of the Child Impact Study is part of the International CRC Impact Study, a project of Radda Barnen/Swedish Save the Children. The study is also being undertaken in Ghana, Nicaragua, Peru, Philippines, and Sweden.

Nearly a decade after ratification of the CRC, more information is needed about whether and how the CRC is being used to advance children's rights. The International CRC Impact Study was created to obtain in-depth information about the effect that the CRC is having on a broad array of institutions and actors who have the responsibility and the ability to advance children's rights at local, national and international levels. The study asks: "How is the Convention on the Rights of the Child influencing policy and programming related to children?" The study will answer this question through comparing the experiences of these diverse countries and will make recommendations about how to further advance the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The study does not focus on the direct impact of the CRC on children, with the exception of how children are involved in creating the policy and programming which affects them. The study does not seek, for example, to ascertain whether there has been a change in child poverty as a result of the CRC. It is too early to undertake such an analysis (and proving such cause and effect would be extremely difficult, if not impossible). The belief underlying the study is that unless such actors as government, non-government organizations, international non-government organizations, media, research institutions, UN agencies and others are changing their programming and policy in response to the CRC, the ability to change children's lives for the better will be severely limited. Thus, the study assesses whether and how those institutions and actors have changed since the CRC was ratified.

The country studies and international study have as their goals to:

1) analyze and document the actions of governments, non-government organizations, UN agencies, and other key players with the responsibility and ability to advance the CRC;

2) assess how particular circumstances in each country, including geographic, economic, political, religious, and social, have affected the manner in which the CRC is advanced;

3) analyze and document the successes and failures found in the reporting, monitoring and implementation of the CRC;

4) highlight "good practices" taking place in the reporting, monitoring and implementation of the CRC;

5) make recommendations about ways in which the reporting, monitoring and implementation of the CRC could be more effectively undertaken in study countries, other countries, and by international and UN organizations.

While the individual country studies will be published as they become available, the International Convention on the Rights of the Child Impact Study will be launched in 1999.

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Impact of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Yemen

Executive Summary

This analysis examines the capacity and experience of Yemeni governmental and non-governmental institutions, as well as international organizations in implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in Yemen. It looks at the progress made thus far, and attempts to unravel the reasons behind successes and failures of implementation. It concentrates on issues of institutional capacity rather than on implementation of specific articles of the Convention.

Yemen is an Arab Moslem country of 16 million people, primarily rural, but rapidly urbanizing. Yemen is one of the least developed countries in the world, with a 1996 GNP per capita of US$300, an estimated poverty level of 19%, a literacy rate of 38%, and an infant mortality rate of 83 per 1000 births. Yemen is currently struggling with a host of problems which compete for attention with child rights. It is in the process of recovering from a major economic crisis which has left large portions of the population in poverty, it has a rapidly dwindling water supply, one of the fastest population growth rates in the world, gender gaps on a number of indicators, and large unmet development needs.

The situation of Yemeni children is one of the most difficult in the world. A full 19% of Yemeni children are born low birth weight, levels of malnutrition are high and rising, infant and child mortality is high, child marriages are common, and enrolment rates of girls in school are the lowest in the Middle East and North African Region. In addition, there are large disparities along gender and geographic lines, with girls and rural children suffering from lower access to government programs than urban and male children.

Children living in especially difficult circumstances in Yemen are refugees, children affected by the 1994 war, those belonging to social classes such as the Akhdam, children in prison, refugees, orphans, beggars, working children, and children with disabilities. Poverty is the issue which disadvantages the largest number of children, i.e., at least one fifth of all children, the majority of whom live in rural areas. Few social services exist for these children, either in the governmental or the non-governmental sectors.

Yemen ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, a very tumultuous time in its history. The country was newly formed, with the reunification of the former Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen into one state, the Republic of Yemen. From 1990 until 1994, the government was largely preoccupied with resolving the administrative and legal differences between the two former states. In 1994, the two month inter-Yemeni war broke out, absorbing national attention until 1995. Concurrent with the reunification process, Yemen 's economy took a nose dive due to its stance during the Gulf Crisis. The Gulf Crisis, brought on by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, resulted in approximately one million unemployed migrant workers being sent home from the Gulf states, and the loss of significant foreign aid as well as the major portion of foreign remittances. The early 1990s ushered in an economic crisis of major proportions, i.e., declining productivity, spiralling inflation, devaluation of the Yemeni rial (YR), a large and inefficient public sector, increasing poverty, and a large foreign

debt. In 1995, Yemen launched a comprehensive economic reform program, which has improved Yemen's macroeconomic picture but which has not yet substantially decreased poverty. Within this climate, the Convention on the Rights of the Child competed for resources and administrative attention.

Both the governmental and non-governmental sectors have set up organizations, and put into place programs in response to the CRC. Several local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for the Rights of the Child have been founded, and the National Yemeni NGO Coalition for the Rights of the Child, consisting of 43 local NGOs has been in operation for over three years. Government has divided the responsibility for implementation of the CRC between the Development Sector of the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Yemeni Motherhood and Childhood Council (MCC), headed by the Minister of Social Affairs. Several positive events have occurred recently in government which could strengthen the implementation of the Convention. Most important of these are the Cabinet decree to create a comprehensive law for children, increased support to the MCC, the development of a national strategy for the MCC, a Cabinet demand that all ministries produce reports showing their compliance with the CRC, and the establishment of the National Supreme Committee for Human Rights.

In evaluating the effect of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Yemen from the point of view of institutions and budgetary support, the effect can be said to be modest. In general, institution building and the effectiveness of programs related to the CRC are proceeding in a positive direction in Yemen, but not yet in an even, organized or rapid fashion. Results of activities have been most tangible since 1996, and the pace of activities has been accelerating.

From the side of government, the institutions chosen to further the implementation of the CRC are under-resourced, have low credibility, and are not high enough on the organizational chart to make a real impact. Further institutional strengthening and professionalization will be necessary. Non-governmental organizations have made a good start, but like government, further professionalization and experience will be necessary in order to make a real impact. For both types of organizations, sustained attention needs to be paid to essential tasks of the CRC implementation process such as monitoring of progress, program implementation, monitoring of events which have an impact on children, harmonizing laws for children with the CRC, establishing ombudsman services, and promotion and awareness raising.

The two major international organizations supporting CRC in Yemen are Radda Barnen and UNICEF. UNICEF has worked primarily from a basic needs perspective up until 1997, and is only now developing a stronger rights perspective. Radda Barnen, on the other hand, has taken a strong rights perspective since 1991, and acted as a catalyst, encouraging both governmental and non-governmental organizations to work toward the implementation of the CRC. Other international development organizations have expressed an interest in using the CRC as the basis of some portion of their programming, and have identified ways in which CRC is relevant to their work, but they lack know-how in this area.

This report contains recommendations to strengthen the work of government, NGOs, and international development organizations. These recommendations concentrate on institution building rather than implementation of specific articles of the Convention, and attempt to target present weaknesses in institutional capacity.

Methodology

This study was carried out by one main consultant, and four secondary consultants, who worked closely with a steering committee composed of government officials, Yemeni NGOs and international organizations whose work was relevant to the CRC. Each stage of the study was discussed with the steering committee, from the terms of reference, to the recommendations.

The data was gathered for this study through interviews with a broad set of people, the use of reports and other written material, and analysis of records. In addition, a small survey of donor organizations was carried out using an interview schedule composed of open and closed ended questions. Two drafts were widely distributed to both the steering committee, and others who were deemed to have relevance to the issue of CRC. Input was then incorporated into the drafts. It was a very inclusive process, and incorporated all relevant feedback at each step of the study.

Impact of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Yemen

BACKGROUND

Country Description

Yemen is an Arab state situated on the southwestern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, and comprising 555,000 square kilometres of mountains, deserts, farmland and coastland. The country is predominantly Moslem, with only a tiny minority of Jews in residence. Yemen remains primarily a traditional rural society, with 76% of its population living dispersed in numerous small villages and hamlets. Urbanization, however, is currently taking place at a rapid pace due to the inability of the semi-arid agricultural land to support a swiftly growing population, and lack of economic opportunities in the rural areas.

Yemen is one of the least developed countries in the world, with a 1996 GNP per capita of US$300 (World Bank, 1997), an estimated poverty level of 19%, a literacy rate of 38% (ibid), and an infant mortality rate of 83 per 1000 births (UNICEF/World Bank/Radda Barnen, 1998). It is rated by UNDP as having a human development index of .361, the third lowest of the Arab states, and the 27th lowest in the world (UNDP, 1997). Among the problems Yemen faces currently are a fertility rate of 7.5 (the highest in the world), high unemployment, significant gender gaps on a number of development indicators, and a nonrenewable water supply which is dwindling at an alarming rate (UNICEF/World Bank/Radda Barnen, Volume I, 1998). Yemen's population was numbered at 15.8 million in 1994, and is growing at a rate of 3.7% per year, one of the fastest population growth rates in the world. At this rate, the population is projected to double within the next 25 years (World Bank, 1997), with serious implications for the ability of the social sectors such as health and education to keep pace.

This decade has been one of economic and political turmoil for Yemen, beginning with the return of almost a million migrants or "returnees" from the Gulf as a result of the Gulf Crisis, precipitated by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. A second major crisis was the attempted secession of the former Southern governorates, and the resulting inter-Yemeni war of 1994, which took place only four years after reunification of North (Yemen Arab Republic) and South (People's Democratic Republic of Yemen) Yemen. Other sources of hardship have been a dramatic drop in foreign aid, increasing disparities between the rich and poor, a rapidly growing debt, and spiralling inflation which has only recently abated. It is also the decade of an economic reform/structural adjustment program, initiated in 1995. On a macro level the economy has begun to improve, but poverty remains high, and appears to be on the rise.

Despite these significant problems, Yemen is a dynamic country which continues to make progress in human development terms, although the rate of progress has slowed in recent years. Emerging from isolation only in the 1960s, Yemen has made impressive gains in the areas of health, education, infrastructure and the economy. For example, in the former Yemen Arab Republic, the infant mortality rate was as high as 257 per 1000 in 1961 (CPO, 1983) compared to 83 per 1000 in 1996. Adult literacy was only 8% in 1960 compared to 37% in 1994. On a macro level, the economy has begun to improve over the last two years. Thus, in spite of the

crises of this decade, Yemen shows a number of positive trends which help create the environment for continued human development.

Children in Yemen

The situation of children has been affected by the overall circumstances in Yemen, and by its cultural history. In many ways, the situation of Yemeni children is one of the most difficult in the world. Poverty, closely spaced pregnancies, and low health awareness combine to start off the life of 19% of Yemeni children as low birth weight (UNICEF, 1997). This is the 11th highest low birth weight rate in the world, and one of the main reasons behind Yemen's very high infant and under-five mortality rates of 83 and 110 respectively (UNICEF, 1998). Other reasons are inaccessible and unaffordable health care, low educational levels of parents, and low access to water and sanitation.

Levels of malnutrition are also high, and apparently rising; the latest figures showing that moderate to severe wasting was 15.7% in 1996, compared to 12.7% in 1992. Almost half of Yemeni children (45%) are below average height-for-age. Only two countries in the world have a higher rate of wasting and only 13 have a higher rate of stunting (UNICEF/World Bank/Radda Barnen, Volume II, 1998). As such, the health and survival of Yemeni children is a main concern for child rights advocates. Despite the need, only 2.75% of the government budget is reserved for health care (ibid).

Yemen's progress in education has been more rapid than its progress in health, with an 11-fold increase in the number of children attending school between 1970 and 1994. However, despite this rapid rise in enrolments, by 1994, only about one half (55%) of children between the ages of 6 and 15 were enrolled in school. This is the lowest rate of enrolment in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region, and well below the government's enrolment target of 85% by the year 2000 (UNICEF/World Bank/Radda Barnen, Volume IV, 1998). In addition, quality of education is poor, with high student-to-teacher ratios, classroom facilities in disrepair, low qualification of Yemeni teachers, outdated curricula and an inadequate number of schools. Drop out rates and repetition rates are high, and student performance is low.

The statistics on education show large disparities in terms of gender and urban-rural residence. While 86.8% of urban boys and 77.9% of rural boys between the ages of 6 and 15 attend school, only 77.7% of urban girls and 24.2% of rural girls do (CSO, 1994). While for education, the greatest disparities exist for rural girls, for health care, both rural boys and rural girls are greatly disadvantaged compared with urban children. Less than one third of rural children have access to government health facilities, while over 80% of urban children do (UNICEF, 1997).

Gender gaps favouring boys exist on a number of indicators. One example is child marriages. In 1991/92, 49% of 20-24 year old females reported they were already married by the age of 18 (CSO et al, 1994). Boys in Yemen are married, on average, four years later than girls.

Beyond issues of gender and rural residence, there are many children in Yemen who are disadvantaged in other ways, or live in especially difficult circumstances. *Children in especially*

difficult circumstances is a term coined by UNICEF ten years ago to reflect those groups of children whose special needs leave them particularly vulnerable and whose rights, therefore, are most in need of protection. In Yemen, major groups of disadvantaged children are refugees, children affected by the 1994 war, those belonging to social classes such as the Akhdam (the lowest social class in Yemen), children in prison, orphans, beggars, working children, and children with disabilities.

Poverty is the issue which disadvantages the largest number of children, i.e., at least one-fifth of all children, the majority of whom live in rural areas. It is the key underlying or contributing factor to most categories of children living in especially difficult circumstances in Yemen. Poverty in Yemen is defined as having insufficient resources to meet one's basic food and non-food requirements. As many as 9% of Yemenis do not have enough to meet even their basic food needs. Poverty in Yemen is much higher than in other countries of the region, with only 6% below the poverty line in Egypt, and 9% in Iran.

As stated in the 1998 UNICEF/World Bank/Radda Barnen Situation Analysis, "Poverty pulls children out of school and into the workforce and street, where they often suffer various forms of exploitation and abuse. It compromises the ability of families and communities to provide a supportive environment for youth, leading some to fall into delinquency and conflict with the law. It renders some families unable to meet the needs of their children altogether, resulting in their children being institutionalised under harsh conditions. Poverty adversely affects the health and nutritional status of mothers and children, contributing to increased incidence of disabilities, and it limits the access of children with disabilities to appropriate care and rehabilitation. Poverty contributes to the marginalisation suffered by groups such as the "Akhdam" and "returnees" and greatly limits opportunities available to children from these groups (UNICEF/World Bank/ Radda Barnen, Volume III 1998)."

It is difficult to state with any accuracy the numbers of children living in especially difficult circumstances in Yemen. Attention to these groups is relatively new, and statistics are incomplete. Government statistics on working children show that 8.4% of children aged 10-14 years were performing productive work of economic value in 1994, up from 4.9% in 1991. The great majority (92%) work within the agricultural sector. Most of these children work for their families without wages, whereas in urban areas, almost one half of working children are paid workers, and only one-third work for their family without wages (ibid).

Children who beg are estimated at between 3,000 and 7,000 in the capital alone, but such children exist in all major and secondary cities in Yemen. Although exact numbers are not available, there is general agreement that the number of child beggars has increased dramatically in recent years, as a result of increasing economic hardship. A large number of child beggars are from the Akhdam class, the lowest social class in Yemen. This group, estimated to number about 20,000 in 1995, suffers disproportionately from poverty and discrimination, and children from this group grow up marginalized and separated from the rest of society, with all the hardships that this entails.

An undetermined number of children are in prisons in Yemen, either because they are detained or convicted of a crime, or because they accompany their imprisoned mothers. The juvenile

justice system in Yemen is weak, and although there are codes for juvenile justice, the government lacks resources to administer this system well. Imprisoned children often share premises with adult criminals, and are not afforded the protection of special facilities. Children in prison may suffer sexual abuse, or undergo long prison sentences with no legal representation. Correctional institutes also exist in four of the main cities in Yemen; in 1996, 406 boys resided there. There are no such facilities for girls.

For orphans, defined in Yemen as children who have lost one or both parents, there is only one state run agency, and this is available only to boys. 1,048 boys reside there, not all of whom are orphans. Non-orphans are also sometimes placed there by their poor families who feel they will have better opportunities than they would if kept at home. There is a waiting list currently of 452 boys. There are no institutions or programs for girl orphans, the majority of whom are taken in by relatives. A number of these girls have very difficult lives, being without family protection, and open to all types of abuse (ibid).

Disability is a significant problem in Yemen, but the number of children with disabilities is uncertain. Using WHO international standards, the total number of people with disabilities in 1996 was estimated at between 1.1 and 1.6 million. Nationally derived estimates are much lower, and the 1994 census found that only 11,458 children under 15 years old were disabled. Disability is higher in rural than urban areas, and females are under-represented in these figures, whether because a higher proportion die at an early age than do boys with disabilities, or because families hide them more than they do boys. Deafness and muteness are the two most common forms of disability found in Yemen.

Whatever the true number of disabled children in Yemen, Yemen has only 12 facilities for all types of disabilities, with only 1,165 children and adults gaining services at these facilities. There are some types of disabilities for which no, or almost no, proper facilities exist. For example, girls suffering from mental or psychological disorders and abandoned by their families are sometimes housed in adult jails, there being few other facilities available to them. Since 1993, however, the Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs in coordination with Radda Barnen began piloting community-based rehabilitation programs for children in six districts in Yemen. It is the only program for rural children with disabilities. This program is expanding, and from 1997/98 has also included an inclusive education component. If this program spreads, it has a good chance of addressing the needs of large numbers of rural children with disability who previously had no possibility for assistance with their disabilities, or for schooling.

Childhood in Yemen is cut short for many children, and adulthood is imposed early. This is largely due to poverty and the lack of a traditional cultural concept of developmental or psychological maturation which recognizes that children need time to develop before they can reach the state of adulthood. While children under the age of six are usually indulged, and given as much love and attention as can be spared by their families, after the age of six, children are often expected to grow up quickly. Their physical appearance and size are often taken as a proxy for overall maturation, there being no other culturally known method for judging readiness for adulthood. For example, a child who is tall is considered more mature than a child of the same age who is short. Before the previous penal code was abolished, a child was considered fully responsible for crimes he/she committed if he/she showed all the physical signs of sexual maturity.

There is also pride taken in a child or adolescent who can do adult things such as handle a gun, defend his family, work, get married, start a family, or drive a vehicle. None of these things are perceived as harmful to the child, and the child's competence at handling these roles is praised, if not expected. Psychological and mental maturation as prerequisites for carrying out these roles are not understood, and economic necessity often demands that a child takes on adult tasks long before he/she reaches adulthood.

The behaviour of adults toward young children shows an attitude of indulgence, as stated above. However, this attitude is often connected, in a subtle way, with a negative attitude toward the capacities of children. For example, one of the several common colloquial terms for children is "jahil," which means "ignorant." Thus far, these underlying cultural attitudes toward children have not been addressed by sustained public information campaigns.

A special problem for child rights advocates in Yemen is the use of the word "child" when promoting child rights. The word "child" in Arabic ("tefl") does not denote the full range of ages included in the CRC definition of child. In the popular conception, a teenager is no longer considered a child, nor does any other word describe this age period exactly. To extend the meaning of the word, "child" to all children between birth and 18 years, special explanations will be needed or the phrase "children between birth and 18 years" will need to be used.

Overview of Events Affecting the CRC

Yemen ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, a very tumultuous time in its history. As described in the section, "Country Description," the country was newly formed, with the reunification of the former Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen into one state, the Republic of Yemen. From 1990 until 1994, the government was largely preoccupied with resolving the administrative and legal differences between the two former states. In 1994, the two month inter-Yemeni war broke out. The country succeeded in remaining unified, but it was only in 1995 that Yemen could turn its attention fully to other matters.

Concurrent with the reunification process, Yemen was dealt a major economic blow. As a result of its stance during the Gulf Crisis, approximately one million migrant workers were sent home from the Gulf states, Yemen lost significant foreign aid, and the major portion of foreign remittances. The economy had already begun to weaken during the 1980s, but the early 1990s ushered in an economic crisis of major proportions, i.e., declining productivity, spiralling inflation, devaluation of the Yemeni rial (YR), a large and inefficient public sector, increasing poverty, and a large foreign debt. In 1995, Yemen was persuaded to launch a comprehensive economic reform program, assisted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As a result, Yemen's macroeconomic picture has shown significant improvement, although with major problems still unresolved, the most important being poverty.

The economic crisis created a large decrease in the real budget available for health, education, and social welfare. For example, in 1990, the per capita health care budget was US$8.30 compared to US$3.62 in 1996 (UNICEF/World Bank/Radda Barnen, Volume I, 1998). Added to these ills, Yemen's rapid population growth, estimated at 3.7% per year, requires constant expansion of the

social infrastructure in order simply to keep up with the same level of coverage. Within this context, implementation of the Convention on Rights of the Child has had to compete with a number of other urgent issues.

The first half of the 1990s presented not only difficulties, however. It also presented significant opportunities for improving the chances of implementation of the CRC. With reunification came increased democratization of the country, and a greater adherence to human rights. Civil society expanded, with a new commitment to freedom of the press and the formation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These NGOs, most of which did not exist prior to 1990, have become an important force in moving CRC forward. An expanded media has also played a role in increasing awareness of the Convention. The economic crisis led to economic analyses and pressure from major donors such as the World Bank for increased spending in the social sectors. As a result, social spending appears to have increased somewhat. These analyses also brought to light the need for improved programs for the poor, and have highlighted the inefficiency of government in addressing these problems. This has spurred efforts toward civil service reform, and sectoral reform. If these efforts succeed, government may have increased capacity to implement its social programs, including programs for children.

Another development which could have a positive effect on children in the near future is the anticipated passing of a new *Law on Local Administration.* Presently, all administrative posts within the government administrative structure at the national, governorate and district level are by appointment. The draft law calls for, among other things, elections at the level of the district, greater local planning and management of resources, and local authority in the raising of revenue. This democratization and decentralization of the local administrative structure creates greater potential for the matching of needs, including children's needs to resources, and makes it more possible that resources, programs, and management skills will make their way farther into rural Yemen where the majority of children's needs are as yet untouched.

Time Line of Events in Yemen related to the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Yemen ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, two years after it was adopted by the UN General Assembly. The following time line shows key events related to CRC in Yemen:

1989 Adoption of the CRC by the UN General Assembly
1991 Yemen ratifies the convention
1993 First government report to UN Committee due
1995 First government report to UN Committee submitted
1995 First NGO alternative report to UN Committee submitted
1995 Yemeni National NGO Coalition for Rights of the Child formed
1997 Supplementary government report to UN Committee submitted in response to special request by the UN Committee in their concluding remarks
1988 Second government report to UN Committee due
1998 Second alternative report requested scheduled to be submitted (June)
1998 Pre-sessional working group meeting of the UN Committee scheduled (October)

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN IMPLEMENTING THE CRC

The Development Sector of the Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs

The Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs (MoISA), Development Sector, has been given the central responsibility for implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The pivotal point has been the Undersecretary for the Development Sector. Existing within this sector is the General Directorate for Women and Children, which has overall responsibility for implementation of social services for women and children, and under which there are three directorates, i.e., 'Women,' 'Children,' and 'Information.' These three directorates work together on issues related to women and children. As such, they will be considered as a whole. It is this General Directorate which has been responsible for coordinating the preparation of the government report for the UN Committee in Geneva, and which is the government point of contact for the CRC.

The ability of the Development Sector of MoISA to implement or to coordinate implementation of the CRC is limited by its institutional placement within the government system, and by its level of resources. This sector is primarily an implementer of social services, with no influence institutionally over other ministries which implement programs related to children. In addition, the General Directorate for Women and Children has only eight staff members, and limited budgetary means. Another body which exists under the chairmanship of the Minister of Social Affairs is the Yemeni Council for Motherhood and Childhood, to be discussed in the following subsection. Discussions are currently underway on how to strengthen the role of *this* body in monitoring and implementation of the CRC. Depending on how these discussions are resolved, there could be a shift in responsibility for the CRC away from the Development Sector of MoISA to the Council. At present, the Council coordinates closely with the General Directorate of Women and Children in all matters related to women and children.

The Development Sector of MoISA has engaged in a number of activities related to the CRC. One of its first activities was to conduct a review of legislation related to children. This review was not comprehensive but highlighted some areas where there was and was not conformity with the CRC. This took place after signing the CRC in the process of preparing the first government report. However, this was a general review, and there are no "before" and "after" reports by government which have kept track in any precise way of the changes in laws affecting children.

The signing of the CRC coincided with the reunification process of the two Yemen's. Many laws were under review at the time of the signing, and this process continues until today. It was an opportunity, largely missed, to create new laws for children which were in conformity with the CRC. However, government did not, and still does not have an office whose task it is to review upcoming legislation for its fit with the CRC. Similarly, it has not attempted to assess the direct and indirect impact of existing legislation and policies on children. As a result, since the signing of the CRC, the enactment of laws which relate to children have been mixed in terms of their conformity with the CRC. For example, juvenile justice laws have become more progressive, with the age of full adult responsibility moved up to 18 years, in accordance with the CRC. On the other hand, the new 1997 Labour Law, number 25, offers less protection than its predecessor. The new law permits child labour unless there is fear of harm to the child's health or morals, and it does not restrict the number of hours the child works. The previous law, while clearly deficient, at least restricted the number of hours of work.

These missed opportunities have a chance to be redressed in the near future due to the passing of a Cabinet Decree on October 22, 1997, which calls for a new Unifying Law for Children. This decree has been proclaimed for the purpose of creating a comprehensive law for children in conformity with the CRC. The draft, due by June, 1998, has not yet been completed. The Cabinet decree was the result of active lobbying by MoISA, a somewhat increased public and governmental awareness of the CRC, and a new commitment by government in implementing the human rights agreements it has signed.

The CRC has had no apparent impact on the way in which information and statistics on children is collected by government agencies. For example, the way in which the census is carried out, and the way yearly statistics are compiled are not particularly child focused, nor have they been altered in response to the monitoring needs of the CRC. Neither, apparently, have government bodies attempted to piggyback CRC related indicators onto national surveys. Neither does the government have a system in place for producing child impact statements at national, regional, and local levels. The MoISA's main involvement in reporting CRC related events is to produce the government report to the UN Committee at a national level. Two reports have been submitted thus far; in 1995 and 1997. There are no annual reports produced. No regional or local mechanisms exist for periodic reporting on the status of children. The only progress which can be said to be made in this regard is that *within* selected programs. For example, the MoISA/Radda Barnen Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Program, through the use of surveys and ongoing monitoring, is collecting new information on rural children with disabilities.

General Government Actions and Budgetary Allocations

The Yemeni government has not set aside a budget to publicize the CRC, and has undertaken no action yet to publicize it, relying instead on international donors and NGOs to take on this task. The Ministry of Education has announced its plan to hold a conference to discuss including CRC in the curriculum, but this has not yet taken place.

It is unclear what percentage of the government budget is spent on children. While it is known that services for children are offered primarily through the ministries of health, education and social affairs, the budget is not disaggregated in such a way to show the portion spent specifically on children. Other ministries also have programs for children, but the same problem exists of budget figures not being disaggregated according to category of recipient of services. Despite these provisos, a rough picture of the budgetary situation can be obtained by comparing the budgets of the three key social sector ministries between 1990 and 1996.

The table below shows that since the signing of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, both the real amount as well as the percentage amount of government expenditures have decreased rather than increased for both the health and education sectors. There were no figures available for MoISA for 1990, so a comparison could not be made. In 1990, the total percentage of the budget devoted to the social sectors was 18.68% (+). In 1996, it was only 15.70%.

Government Expenditures for the Social Sectors, 1990 and 1996				
Sector	*1990*		*1996 (provisional)*	
	US$ per capita	As a % of total government expenditure	US$ per capita	As a % of total government expenditure
Health	8.30	3.56	3.62	2.75
Education	35.30	15.12	16.74	12.70
MoISA	..	not available	0.32	0.25

(source: based on ROY and World Bank sources, 1997, and 1998)

On the other hand, some programs related directly to children have seen their budgets dramatically increased. For example, the Yemeni Council for Motherhood and Childhood is budgeted for 4 million Yemeni rials ($29,851) for 1998. While still a small budget, this is a significant increase from the 1 million Yemeni rials ($7,576) of the previous year. Similarly, the budget for EPI (the expanded program for immunization) has risen significantly between 1996 and 1998 to YR200 million. The MoISA CBR program is another good example, with a budget of 104,000 Yemeni rials in 1995 rising 27-fold to a budget of 2,800,000 ($20,896) in 1998.

For 1997 and 1998, figures on expenditures are not yet available. Figures on allocations, however, show a slight improvement in the share of the national budget reserved for the health sector of 3.1 and 3.7% in 1997 and 1998 respectively. In education, the percentages are 13.8 and 14.2 respectively, and for the MoISA, the budget allocation is a stable 0.3% of total government budget for both years (Ministry of Finance, 1998). For health and education, the dollar figures do not yet approach those from 1990. It can be concluded that spending on social services for children has not yet emerged as a major issue, and has not been a noticeable priority of government.

In the same way, the signing of the Convention has not prompted the government to provide more resources for most children in especially difficult circumstances or with special needs e.g. refugees, working and street children. Discussions on this are only now beginning, but there are not yet any new projects with budgets in place. According to the MoISA, the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Planning both claim there is no money available for these projects. There is a great deal of rhetoric regarding children, but still little priority in terms of allocation of resources. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that in some government sectors, such as the criminal justice system, there are not yet any departments set up to deal with children, and thus no one to advocate for a budget for children and youth affected by or requiring services from this sector. For example, the juvenile courts exist on paper, but not yet in reality, and thus can not lobby for the needs of juvenile offenders.

One major exception to this general rule is the Community-Based Rehabilitation Program which began in 1993, and was referred to earlier in this section. This program, which began in three pilot districts has now expanded to six in five different governorates. This program, initiated by MoISA in partnership with Radda Barnen, is assisting some 1,200 children with disabilities and

maintaining links to 250 more who no longer require services. It now includes a pilot inclusive education component initiated in partnership with the Ministry of Education, in three of these districts. In the 1997/98 school year, 433 children with disabilities were included in ordinary schools in the CBR areas. In addition, the Ministry of Education established an Inclusive Education Section in 1997, and sent out a letter to all regular schools in the country encouraging them to accept children with disability. This may have caused the enrolment of many more children with disability throughout the country. Most expenses of the project are covered by the ministries involved, and government commitment has been increasing every year (Radda Barnen, 1998).

There has been strong pressure from World Bank and other large donors to increase social spending; these donors seeing human development as a necessary part of economic development. The leverage of such organizations on government is much greater than that of CRC advocates. Despite this, spending on the social sectors has only shown small improvements, with more success at the program level for a minority of programs, e.g., the MoISA/Radda Barnen CBR program level, EPI, and MCC, than at the sectoral level.

Resources aside, the capacity of the government to implement effective programs remains limited. Targeting children through the allocation of more resources and the launching of more programs will not necessarily lead to an improvement in their situation if the systems on which they are based can not carry them effectively. A good case in point is the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH). For many years the MoPH has targeted children, but complex financial regulations, lack of a running cost budget, and poor systems of quality control have resulted in poor use of resources, and a collapsing health delivery system. Under this failed system, even the exclusive targeting of children would not have resulted in major gains for them.

In recognition of the fact that it suffers from structural inefficiencies which hamper its ability to meet a number of targets, the government is now taking steps to try to improve its performance. For example, government is currently initiating a civil service reform project in realization of the fact that current civil service policy creates major inefficiencies in the implementation of its programs. Similarly, the Ministry of Public Health is launching a health sector reform policy in order to improve health care provision. The success of such efforts will create the possibility for successful child-targeted programs. Until then, targeting alone will have limited benefit.

Regarding the obtaining of equal rights for girls and boys, the government affords more or less equal rights, with the exception of the personal status law. However, in practical terms, girls do not have the same access as boys to government resources, especially as regards educational and training programs. Despite heavy targeting of girls' education by donors, and despite the announcement of government intentions to initiate policies which increase the enrolment rates of girls, there has been almost no progress made this decade in improving enrolment rates, and there has not been a strong and effective focus on policies to help close the gap between boys and girls. Cultural attitudes as well as a scarcity of resources combine to legitimate boys as the *real* target of government educational resources. Comments of educators, such as, "We don't even have enough resources to educate *boys*," belie the attitude that boys are the legitimate receivers of government educational resources, and first priority will go to them.

As with the budget, general reference to children in government policy papers is not strong. For example, in the government's four year program document, accepted by Parliament in June, 1997, there is little rhetoric about children. In this 30 page report, only 10 points out of 260 refer directly or indirectly to children. (Abbas, 1998)

There are a number of tasks related to the CRC that no group, governmental nor non-governmental, has yet taken on. One such task is that of systematically monitoring the Rights of the Child. Because of this, it can not be categorically demonstrated that Yemeni children's situation has improved or declined as a result of the CRC. In addition, while it is obvious that since 1992 there has been increased awareness of children's rights and children's issues, and that a number of institutions have been set up to move forward the agenda of children's rights, their effectiveness is not yet demonstrated in terms of programmatic approach and outcome.

Furthermore, there is no organization which systematically monitors events in the country to be able to pick up those which are likely to affect children. While some events are picked up through personal and professional contacts, many of them are not caught in time for Child Rights groups to make an effective effort to influence them. A good example is the following case study on the Yemeni Personal Status Law.

Case Study on the Personal Status Law

The Yemeni Personal Status Law (PSL) deals with issues of personal status such as marriage, legal competence, divorce, custody, and inheritance. The present law governing Yemen is the same as that of the Yemen Arab Republic before reunification. It was re-established post reunification in 1992 in preference to the Family Law of the former PDRY by presidential decree and without Parliamentary debate. It is based on a conservative interpretation of the Islamic Shari'ah, whereas that of the former PDRY was based on a more liberal interpretation. It contains a number of issues directly related to child rights such as minimum age of marriage and child custody. It establishes the minimum age of marriage of girls at 15 years of age, and of boys at 16.

In 1997, several modifications of this law were attempted. One of the modifications attempted was to abolish the already low minimum age of marriage of girls provided for in the present law. This modification encourages early marriage, in contradiction to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Early marriage also promotes population expansion, which is in conflict with Yemeni government policy since it places a burden on the limited resources of the economy. In addition, early marriage contributes to Yemen's high maternal and infant mortality rate. As such, the present law, and even more so the modifications of this law, adversely affects the health and survival of the female child and denies her the rights afforded in three separate human rights conventions i.e. Rights of the Child, CEDAW, and the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage, and Registration of Marriage.

A research team from the Empirical Research and Women's Studies Center (ERWSC) at Sana'a University studied the proposed modifications and drafted an objection, from the point of view of women's rights. Subsequently a seminar was held, after which human rights activists, women lawyers and and seminar participants developed a strategy for mobilizing opposition. As a result of this as well as other actions, the President of the Republic returned the proposed modifications to the Parliament and refused to sign them into law.

A case study was carried out on this process in order to see if child rights groups, both governmental and non-governmental, had known of this amendment process, and had tried to influence it. In addition, other groups who may have had an interest or stake in this process were interviewed such as the lawyers office and the women's union. This was a test case to understand the ability of child rights groups, first, to detect pending legislation related to children, and second, their ability to organize a lobby in favour of children.

Organization	Type of Organization		Knew about PSL	Tried to Affect Age	Knows of CRC	Specified Age
	Gov't	Non-government				
MOISA	*		no	no	yes	no
Legal Affairs	*		no	no	no	no
ERWSC		*	yes	yes	yes	16
Lawyer's Office		*	yes	yes	yes	15
Women's Union	*		yes	no	no	no
Aden Society for Women		*	no	no	yes	no
Al Thora Newspaper	*		yes	no	yes	no
Islah Party, Women's sect		*	yes	no	no	no
Radio-women & children's sec.	*		yes	no	yes	no
TV - women & children's sec.	*		no	no	yes	no
PGC, women's sec.		*	yes	no	no	no
MCC	*		no	no	yes	no
NGO Coalition for Rights of the Child		*	yes	yes	yes	18
Total	7	6	8 yes	3 yes	9 yes	3

The results of this survey show that most organizations who have a mandate to promote children's rights did not try to influence the age of marriage, not even the Mother and Child Council or the MoISA, who have the largest government role in CRC. Only three organizations, the Yemeni National NGO Coalition for Rights of the Child, the lawyers office and the Empirical Research and Women's Studies Center, tried to influence age. Only one of these was a CRC related group. This case study demonstrates that there is apparently no watchdog organization set up within government which can detect events which will affect children. The NGO Coalition was successful in detecting this legislation but its lobby was a lone effort, and did not attempt to pull in other partners.

The experience with the personal status law is significant, because efforts to change it were ongoing for over a year, giving ample time to establish a broad based lobby. In addition, the issue was simple, i.e., age of marriage. Of those organizations who tried to influence the age at marriage, only one, the Yemeni National NGO Coalition for Rights of the Child, named 18 as the age they advocated. The other two named 15 or 16 years. This was because the efforts the latter organizations were involved in were limited to keeping the age from being lowered. However, just as the Shari'ah Legalization Committee attempted to modify the present law in a way which would have worsened the situation for girls, a move to modify the law in favour of girls was open to any interested groups such as a child rights organization. The fact that this happened only in a minor way is due to the weakness of existing organizations in acting as watchdogs or ombudsman for children. In addition, cultural attitudes toward age of marriage are still strongly biased in favour of early marriage. Interviews with members of two NGOs belonging to the Yemeni NGO Coalition for Rights of the Child revealed that even among some of these CRC aware groups, 16 was considered an appropriate age for marriage of girls.

The government has not yet produced guidelines for the promotion of children's participation in local democracy. This is not surprising since democracy is still being developed in the government as a whole. Neither has the active participation of children in designing and evaluating programs which are meant to serve them become a feature of government programs. A very recent exception is the community based rehabilitation (CBR) program underway in Lahej, Abien, Aden, Ibb and Taiz carried out in partnership between Radda Barnen and the MoISA. This program, through the use of surveys and other means, is regularly taking into account the perspective of children in planning its programs.

Special training by government of civil servants, or professionals who interact with children has not yet taken place. For example, the government has not engaged in specialized training of professionals who interact with children, nor has it produced any good practice guides for use by policy makers and practitioners.

Government cooperation with Yemeni NGOs is partial. Some activities, such as seminars, are carried out in cooperation with the National Yemeni NGO Coalition for Rights of the Child, a local coalition of NGOs working towards the implementation of the CRC in Yemen. In addition, the Yemeni Council for Motherhood and Childhood (MCC) is composed of both government officials and NGOs. Also, for the Landmines Awareness Campaign, both government and NGOs worked together on a common issue. On the other hand, there was no feedback requested of NGOs for the first government report to the UN Committee, and the government report was not widely distributed to interested NGOs. For the second government report, only one member of the Coalition was invited to participate.

At the local and governorate level, there is a noticeable lack of government activities around the CRC. Reporting, monitoring, training, awareness raising, and special programming do not occur at these levels. This gap may be partially addressed by the opening of branches of the MCC at the governorate level, to be discussed in the following section.

All in all, government actions related directly to the CRC have been of a general nature and remain at an initial stage. Some coordination, promotion, and reporting takes place, but lobbying, monitoring, and implementation are weak. There is no high level body whose undivided mandate it is to take on these tasks, and government has not specified a mechanism by which the CRC is to be implemented. Neither has the government created an independent commissioner or ombudsperson to monitor and promote the implementation of the CRC. At the local and governorate levels, little attention has been paid to the CRC by government, and mechanisms do not presently exist to target the CRC at these levels, nor to coordinate between local, governorate and national levels.

Yemeni Council for Motherhood and Childhood

The Yemeni Council for Motherhood and Childhood (MCC) has been assigned the responsibility for coordination of implementation of children's, as well as mothers' issues. This Council, first established in 1991 by Republican Decree No. 53, resulted from an Arab initiative to form such councils in all Arab states in order to move the issues of mothers and children higher on their national agendas. The formation of these councils preceded Yemen's signing of the Convention.

The Yemeni MCC was first located administratively under the Ministry of Health before it moved to the MoISA in 1991.

The division of responsibilities between the Development Sector of the MoISA and the MCC vis a vis the CRC is not clearly articulated. While the Development Sector retains the primary responsibility for implementation of the CRC, the MCC takes as its task coordination of programs and policies regarding *children*. The CRC should be the guiding principle for all work related to children in countries which have signed the Convention. As such, there appears to be some additional clarity needed in Yemen regarding a CRC umbrella organization for government.

The MCC Secretariat consists of a secretary general and a deputy secretary general, as well as representatives from MoISA, the Ministry of Education (MoE), and the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH). Members are from all relevant ministries, under the presidency of the Minister of Insurance and Social Affairs. The vice-president is the Deputy Minister of MoISA, and members consist of deputy ministers from the ministries of MoPH, MoE, Ministry of Planning and Development, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Local Administration, and the Ministry of Culture. In addition, other governmental and non-governmental bodies are represented by the President of the Yemeni Women's Union, the Director General of the Red Crescent Association, the General Director of the Yemen Family Care Association, the General Director of the National Committee for Education, Culture and Learning, representatives of the General Directorate of the Cabinet, and the General Director for Women's and Children's Affairs in the MoISA, as well as representatives from the Central Statistical Organization, the Society for Pediatricians (an NGO), and the National Population Council. There are 21 members total.

While the MCC was founded at a national level in 1991, it wasn't until 1995 that this council began to be active. Since 1995, meetings have been held more often than earlier, although they are still irregular, and irregularly attended. Two-thirds membership is considered a quorum, but usually less than 50% of members attend each meeting. The General Director of the MCC has been on board since 1993, but the deputy director is new since late 1997, and membership has not been stable, with rapid turnover of ministry representatives (Namazi, 1998). In 1995, a branch of the MCC was established in Aden. In 1997, further branches were established in the governorates of Taiz, Ibb, Abyan, Lahej, and Sana'a, and plans put in place to form branches in other governorates. In 1997, the MCC produced a national strategy and workplan, and began advocating for a new law for children consistent with the CRC, referred to earlier. In addition, the Cabinet has demanded from each ministry its account of how far it has come in implementing the CRC. This report will be compiled by the MCC from the information provided by each ministry. It is hoped that this new interest from higher levels of the government will move forward the agenda of CRC in general, and of the MCC in particular.

The MCC has the following overall objectives:

- Creating a strategy and setting general policies for programs related to motherhood and childhood.
- Coordinating with the various governmental and non-governmental groups working on issues related to mothers and children.
- Developing a national policy for motherhood and childhood, and through awareness-raising, developing a positive image for it.

- Developing relations with governmental and non-governmental international agencies working in the field of motherhood and childhood, especially in Arab countries.
- Working to provide funding and to expand services and programs and projects of the MCC and to direct foreign aid to the appropriate agencies.

The MCC sees itself very much as a coordinating body, with little role as an ombudsman, or as an implementing or monitoring body. Its role is indirect i.e. to encourage the different ministries to prioritize children in their planning strategies. Within this general strategy, it is working towards increasing the priority for children in the Second National Five Year Plan. Recently, the Council has been using the rhetoric of child *rights* rather than simply children's *issues*. The Council places more emphasis on children than on mothers because there are already other bodies working to improve the role of women, such as the National Committee for Women.

A recent analysis of the MCC by UNICEF states that the Council faces serious capacity and credibility challenges. Among some of the problems identified in this analysis are the following:

- The inability to create a credible niche for itself. The level of cooperation of the ministries and other partners has not been encouraging, those who attend meetings are not at the decision making level, and no concrete action involving coordinated and collaborative efforts of ministerial partners has been initiated.
- Most ministry officials at national and local levels are not aware of the existence of the MCC. The turnover of ministry representatives on the Council has been rapid, communication between the Council and its partners has been weak, and the Council Secretariat has not provided any directives or guidance to the local branches.
- Resource limitations form a serious constraint. Professional capacity is low, the financial resources available to the Council are limited, with the annual budget expended primarily on furniture, and with hardly any activities being carried out for women and children.
- The strategy endorsed by the Cabinet has not been sufficiently elaborated into a plan of action with an agreed upon role definition for all partners. As a result, there is some anxiety among the sectoral ministries that the Council might encroach upon their fields of jurisdiction and undermine their mandates (Namazi, 1998).

The national strategy of the MCC suffers from the same weakness manifested by many national strategies, that is the links between goals, strategies, and resources are weak, making it difficult to implement. The strategy consists of a long list of activities, goals and projects which do not have measurable outcomes or matching resources. For example, one goal is to reduce illness and death from tetanus in mothers, without putting this goal in measurable terms. Other goals such as providing means of birth control are already goals of the MoPH, and it is not clear what additional value stating these goals in the MCC strategy has. In other cases, the goals are unrealistic, e.g., providing primary health care to 90% of the population by the year 2000. In addition, some of the provisions of child rights are not included in the strategy, e.g., inclusive education.

The organizational structure and mandate of the MCC does not perfectly match the requirements of the CRC for two reasons. One is that the MCC does not have a clear mandate to embrace the CRC and move it forward. In its charter, it does not mention the CRC, and the division of tasks related to the CRC between it and the Development Sector of the MoISA are not clear. This makes

it unclear how it will approach the many problems of children in Yemen, i.e., will it be from a rights perspective or from a charitable/needs perspective.

A second way in which there is a lack of fit between the CRC and MCC is that the mandate of the MCC is mothers *and* children, not only children. This may constitute a problem because its mandate is so broad, i.e., it must improve the situation of approximately 80% of the population. While it is a traditional strategy to place the concerns of women and children together, from a programmatic and strategic point of view, these concerns are not one and the same, and combining them within the mandate of one organization is likely to produce a lack of clarity and purpose for that organization. While it is estimated that 75% of the work of the MCC now concerns children, this is a response to practical realities rather than a mandate to prioritize children. In addition, the fact that motherhood and childhood are bonded together so closely may limit the potential of the girl child in her role for the future.

Recently, UNICEF has taken a strong interest in strengthening the MCC, and has been studying the possibility of basing its upcoming UNICEF/World Bank Child Development Project within the Council. However, as noted above, its analysis of the Council has highlighted the need to strengthen it significantly before it can be an effective vehicle for promotion of the CRC. It has made a number of recommendations to that effect, many of which will be echoed in this report.

The Submission of Government Reports to the UN Committee

The government submitted its first report to the UN Committee in Geneva in 1995, nearly two years late. The government report was discussed in Geneva in January 1996, and the NGO report was discussed in a pre-session of the Committee with two representatives from the Yemeni NGOs present, in November, 1995. The major comments received back from the UN Committee were the following:

- The report has not followed the guidelines for the preparation of the States parties' initial reports
- The unclear status of the Convention in the domestic legal framework
- Lack of conformity of legislative provisions with the legal definition of the child
- Persistence of discriminatory attitudes toward girls
- Insufficient measures and programs for the protection of the rights of the most vulnerable children
- Insufficient measures taken in the areas of juvenile justice
- Insufficient steps taken to create awareness on the Convention
- Lack of a comprehensive policy on children, lack of monitoring, and lack of gathering of quantitative and qualitative data
- Insufficient measures taken to ensure the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights to the maximum extent of available resources, in particular, in relation to the most vulnerable groups.

The MoISA feels that the recommendations of the UN Committee were worded with sufficient clarity, and were helpful. The MoISA held only one seminar to disseminate the findings of the Committee, which it acknowledges was not sufficient. It was attended by the Vice Prime Minister,

the Deputy Minister of Social Affairs, the Deputy Minister of Health, and officials from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture. The Yemeni National Coalition for Rights of the Child as well as Radda Barnen were instrumental in having this seminar staged. The dissemination process has included no Parliamentary debate nor any widespread public discussions of the issue. However, the report and findings were submitted to the Cabinet.

The government has not yet established any working parties to work on implementation of the recommendations. However, as an initial step, each ministry was ordered, through means of an inter-ministerial decree, to study the Convention and present a report by March 1998 on the role of that ministry in implementing the CRC. They were given only three or four months to complete it, and were to establish working groups for this task. By June 1998 the reports had not been finalized, which the undersecretary of MoISA feels is due to lack to interest.

The first government report to the UN Committee itself contained a plan of action for improving the situation of children in Yemen. It outlined four specific programs that it would put in place. As shown in the following table, only one of these programs is in the process of implementation.

Plan of Action of the Yemen First State Party Report on Implementation of the CRC	
Program	***Status***
Establishment of a Home for Socially Handicapped Juvenile Girls	no activity
Establishment of a Training Center for the Staff of Preschool Educational Establishments	no activity
Establishment of Children's Villages	1 village being built
Opening a Social Welfare Department at the Faculty of Education of Sana'a University	no activity

The government has submitted a supplementary follow up report to the UN Committee to respond to the points and recommendations made by the Committee on the first report. This special report was requested by January 1997, but was submitted in October of that year. The second government report is still pending, and is due in 1998. It remains unclear whether the government means to submit a separate second report, or whether the supplementary report is considered by government also to be the second government report. Several drafts of the supplementary report have been submitted to the UN Committee.

The supplementary report was meant to describe the actions taken by government as a result of the recommendations made by the UN Committee. The following table demonstrates that the report included *information* on most of the recommendations, but that for about half the recommendations, no action has yet been taken by government.

Follow-up Actions by Government to the UN Committee Recommendations, as described in the 1997 Government Supplementary Report	
Recommendations of the UN Committee	***Follow-up actions, as described in Report***
Raise the minimum age of marriage, and ensure an equal age for boys and girls	No action taken
Age of criminal responsibility should not be established at too low an age	Report documented the legal codes related to juvenile justice.
Create a wider awareness of the CRC	Report mentions the MCC in this role
Develop family counselling services	No action taken
Incorporate the CRC in school curricula	No action taken
Establish a multi-disciplinary mechanism for coordination and monitoring	Report mentions the MCC in this role
Ensure that budgetary allocation is provided to services for children, and that priority is given to disadvantaged groups	Report gave budgetary allocation for education but not for health. Did not address the issue of disadvantaged children
Special protection measures be adopted in relation to refugee children, children involved with the juvenile justice system, and working and street children	No action taken
Prepare a progress report in accordance with the Committee's guidelines for initial reports.	Report follows some of the guidelines, but does not address the general measures of implementation, nor each article separately
Make the concluding observations widely available to the public	This has been done to a limited extent

This report did not take a critical look at the implementation of CRC in Yemen, nor highlight the issues requiring special attention. Rather it was descriptive of what exists and what some of the programs to tackle the issues are. It did not fully describe the real situation, rather the intention. In comparison, the media and other non-governmental groups are more critical and analytical. For example, an article in al-Qustas Magazine (No 0, April 1998), a new legal journal, and the first such journal to be published in Yemen, shows that the new labour law, No. 25 of 1997 offers less protection to children than its predecessor did. As mentioned earlier, the new law permits child labour unless there is fear of harm to the child's health or morals, whereas the old law restricted work to less than 7 hours a day, and forbid continuous work for more than 4 hours at a time. This was not highlighted in the government report.

The National Supreme Committee for Human Rights

An initiative is presently underway which may have important implications for implementation of the Convention. A National Supreme Committee for Human Rights was formed in January 1998. This is an interministerial committee made up of ministers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Attorney General's Office. A working group is presently being formed from these ministries and óffices. It is envisioned that NGOs will also take part in this process.

The task of this committee is to ensure that the international treaties on human rights signed by Yemen are being respected, the CRC being one of them. In the past, these treaties were put on the shelf after signing, and no practical follow up measures for their implementation occurred. The intention, with the formation of this high committee, is to enlist the different government bodies concerned about human rights to combine efforts for real implementation of the treaties. The highest priority initially will be placed on the modification of national laws to make them consistent with the international treaties and conventions signed by Yemen. The government body most involved with each of the individual human rights treaties will deal with that one. For example, the MoISA will be responsible for coordinating the legal process related to the CRC. In addition to modifying the laws, the committee also plans to work to ensure that practical implementation of the various conventions and treaties takes place, and to expand the knowledge of the public about human rights.

For each of the different treaties, different modes of action will be important. For the most part, modifying the laws, although an essential first step, will be the easiest. Enforcing the laws will be more difficult. In addition, attempting to enforce a law about which the public at large is not yet convinced, and which they do not respect, may backfire and set up resistance to the law. Thus, for certain issues, such as age at marriage and mandatory schooling, public awareness campaigns are important as a first step. The issue of government services will also need to be addressed if the work of this committee is to have an impact. For example, public awareness campaigns and law enforcement will not noticeably improve the situation of education for children if more government schools and more resources are not provided to this sector.

This Committee has begun to receive international support. The European Union and the United States government have agreed to send lecturers on human rights policy to Sana'a University. Also, the Red Cross is organizing a seminar on Security and Justice for International Humanitarian Law. Their target is national security officers, because many of the human rights violations which take place in Yemen are due to security officers not knowing the law. Similar initiatives related to the CRC could potentially have a large impact.

The impetus for activation of the Supreme Committee is the democratization process that Yemen has been undergoing throughout the 1990s. Human rights, as an essential part of that process, is being put higher on the national agenda. It represents a new determination by government to address issues of human rights. It is unlikely that the CRC had any direct impact on the decision to form this committee. More pressing issues leading to this decision were issues of law and order. In addition, Yemen is eager to build relations with the West, and human rights remains an issue of

contention. Yemen has signed and ratified 11 human rights treaties, with four more ratified by the former Yemen Arab Republic. All the treaties are considered important, but some, such as those related to law and order are considered urgent, and will receive priority.

The Director of the Human Rights Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who coordinates this committee, feels that of all the conventions, those of child rights and women's rights will be the most difficult and complicated to enforce, because of cultural attitudes in Yemen which exist in contradiction to them. Because of this, one of the most important strategies will be to carry out awareness campaigns to change public attitudes. He makes the point that is better for the public to be convinced or partially convinced before one attempts to enforce a law (Al Akwa, 1998). One example of this is minimum age of marriage. Such a law is virtually unenforceable in the Yemeni environment unless and until there is a general consensus that age of marriage should be raised.

In summary, government has made initial moves to move forward the Convention on the Rights of the Child. While there are still many issues to tackle, and government does not yet have effective bodies in place to bring about significant change, several recent government initiatives with the potential to further the implementation of the CRC have taken place. To summarize, these initiative are:

- Setting a national strategy of the MCC (1997)
- National Supreme Committee on Human Rights formed to promote implementation of human rights agreements signed by Yemen (1998)
- Cabinet demand that all ministries report on what they have accomplished in the area of child rights to date (1997)
- Interministerial decree to create a unifying law for children, and making it in accordance with the CRC (1997)
- Increasing budgetary support to the Yemeni Council for Motherhood and Childhood (1997 and 1998)

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Yemeni National NGO Coalition for Rights of the Child

A number of non-government organizations (NGOs) work on children's issues in Yemen, some of whose mandates relate specifically to children, and some whose mandates relate to issues and populations which include children directly or indirectly. The Yemeni National NGO Coalition for Rights of the Child is the most well known of these, and most highly focused on the CRC.

The Coalition was formed after the initial experience of NGOs that working individually on issues related to the CRC did not have a noticeable impact. It was felt that by banding together, their voices would be heard. Radda Barnen was instrumental in initial awareness raising around the issue of child rights with a small number of interested NGOs, such as SOFD (Social Organization for Family Development), and the Yemeni Psychological Association. These and other NGOs they helped identify worked together to write the first Yemeni NGO Alternative Report on the CRC to the UN Committee. Concurrent with this successful action, in March 1995, these NGOs officially formed themselves into the Yemeni National NGO Coalition for Rights of the Child.

The Coalition has a formal structure consisting of an elected board of nine members, governorate level coalition groups in each of five governorates, and a manager who functions as executive and who executes decisions made by the board. Each governorate level coalition group elects a coordinator from among themselves. These governorate level coordinators all report to the vice-general coordinator of the national board and have regular gatherings for planning and follow up. The chairperson or coordinator of the board is elected by the board. The Coalition is licensed through the MoISA, the main body licensing NGOs in Yemen.

The Coalition divides itself into a number of working units, i.e., a training unit, a study and documentation unit, a media unit, a social unit, a public relations unit, a financial affairs unit, and a unit of the secretariat. The activities accomplished by most of these units are still limited. The most active of the units has been the training unit, which has been responsible for multiple training activities. While all units now work according to the board's directives, the Coalition plans, in the near future, to integrate these functions within each of its activities.

Initially, the Coalition consisted of 41 NGOs, but now has grown slightly to 43 organizations, associations, and unions which exist in five of Yemen's 18 governorates, i.e., Sana'a, Taiz, Hadramaut, Hodeidah, and Aden. Other NGOs outside its auspices also work on issues related to children, but the Coalition contains the majority of such organizations. It is one of the few coalitions of NGOs formed in Yemen around a specific issue.

The Coalition consists of such diverse organizations, associations, and unions as the Taiz Writers Guild, the Hodeidah Labour Union, the Hadramaut Yemeni Women's Union, various associations for the disabled, and the Yemeni Organization for Human Rights, as well as a number of organizations that focus specifically on children, such as the Hodeidah Society for the Rights of the Yemeni Child. The fact that the main objectives of the majority of these organizations are not necessarily child related has worked, to some extent, to the advantage of the child rights agenda. It has helped move children higher up on the agenda of a number of these organizations, and created

a stronger programming focus on children. On the other hand, there is a feeling by some members that because few of the groups specifically target children, the child centered output of the Coalition has been weakened. It is cited as one reason for the slowness with which implementation of the CRC has taken off in Yemen. The Coalition is currently in the process of license renewal, and plans to to attract more child-centered NGOs to it for the next licensing period.

The Coalition's main objectives are as follows:

- To adopt children's issues, and to defend the rights of the child on all occasions and in all forums.
- To coordinate efforts of Yemeni NGOs and associations, and to strengthen their role in the field of child rights.
- To work towards implementation of the CRC in line with the reality and religion of Yemen.
- To identify priorities and needs of Yemeni children, and to work towards establishing an integral strategy for future action in cooperation with other concerned bodies.
- To engage in fruitful relations and joint programs with Arab and International organizations involved in child rights activities, in coordination with the competent administrative body.
- To train, retrain, and develop the capacities of staff working with children, and to focus on voluntary action in this regard.
- To increase public awareness of child rights through strengthening the role of the media in cooperation with the concerned authorities.
- To contribute to the establishment and support of NGOs in areas which lack such organizations.
- To encourage care of orphans, the disabled, homeless, refugees, and imprisoned children, through coordination with the relevant authorities.
- To work with the State in following up on the deficiencies of legislation and services for children.
- To prepare necessary research, studies, and practical programs and plans for meeting the needs of children in the areas of health, education and leisure activities, and to endeavour to establish a data center on children's issues.

As mentioned above, the initial activity of the Coalition was to write an alternative report. The different members of the Coalition contributed according to their field of expertise, after which the report was ratified by the constituent assembly. This report was not a response to the government report, because the government report was not received on time by the Coalition. It was written separately, and after several unsuccessful applications for the government report. One of the difficulties the Coalition found in writing their report was that appropriate statistics on children were incomplete, and those available were often inaccurate. This situation continues until today.

Members of the Coalition attended the pre-session working group of the UN Committee in Geneva. They were satisfied with the way the Committee used their information, and found the session satisfactory. The Coalition felt that, in general, the questions which the Committee asked the

government reflected the concerns raised by the NGO alternative report. Some of the important questions and issues raised were:

- the non-existence of a mechanism for working for the best interests of the child
- the non-existence of a fund to put in place projects for children
- the role of the media
- the workings of the juvenile justice system
- the absence of a role played by the Yemeni Council for Motherhood and Childhood

Following the UN Committee hearings, the Coalition held a dissemination workshop with the MoISA. The Coalition then went to the Parliament with the results of the Committee recommendations, and discussed them. The Prime Minister was also sensitized to the issue. The Coalition is now involved in collecting information and studying the second government report in order to prepare a second alternative report.

In addition to the usefulness of the Committee's remarks for implementation of the Convention in Yemen in general, the Coalition also used the results of the UN Committee concluding recommendations to improve its own work. These concluding remarks helped the Coalition focus more on essential CRC issues, rather than to take a charity approach to work with children, which had been the tendency in the past.

The experience of the Coalition is only three years old, with most activities beginning only in 1996. Besides its participation in the UN reporting process, some of the most important activities carried out by the Coalition thus far are:

- Consolidating its organization/institution building
- Training its member NGOs on CRC
- Carrying out a legal study (not yet completed)
- Distributing large numbers of copies of the Convention to relevant governmental and non-governmental groups
- Promoting the CRC through the hosting of local, national and regional seminars and workshops
- Carrying out training seminars for the media; two in Sana'a and five in other governorates
- Studying the situation and preparing reports on juvenile justice in each of the five governorates
- Carrying out initial advocacy work on child labour

Initial activities carried out by the Coalition were very broad, and they attempted to do much more than its organizational structure or experience could handle. In 1996, after taking stock of their experience, they became more focused, with a decision to concentrate on two major issues, i.e., juvenile justice and child labour.

A significant part of the first three years of this NGO's existence has been devoted to institution building. NGO coalitions are a new experience in Yemen and the Coalition has had to find its way in order to bring together the agendas of very different groups. For example, the fact that child labour and juvenile justice were chosen as areas of focus does not suit all members of the Coalition, some of whom felt that it has little to do with their own NGO agendas.

The Coalition has taken on a limited lobbying role. For example, through individual and organizational contacts, it attempts to influence a number of issues related to children, but it does not have a formal lobbying organization in place to carry out sustained lobbying on a number of fronts. It has also worked with members of Parliament to get questions asked about how the CRC and recommendations from the UN Committee are being pursued. In addition, the Coalition submitted written observations and proposals regarding the juvenile justice law, and child labour to the Parliament. Through its membership with varied NGOs such as Labour Unions and the Writers Union, it has also developed alliances with organizations not directly involved with children but whose work impacts on them. The Coalition has involved the media in the awareness raising process. It has also attempted to include academics but so far has made little progress in this area. The Coalition does not produce a newsletter, but plans to do so in the coming year.

The Coalition's own assessment of its advocacy work during 1996 was that it was too episodic to create sustained media coverage of CRC, and limited to one on one discussions with decision makers. The plans for 1997 were to do the following advocacy work. The first five have been initiated.

- Identifying and working with respective Parliamentary committees on child related laws
- Obtaining media support to publicize and highlight the issue of juvenile offenders, working children and other issues
- Identifying specific opportunities for advocacy
- Producing reports on children in conflict with the law
- Establishment of a national coordination, information and lobbying office in Sana'a
- Establishing an informal network of experts to become a type of advisory group
- Integrating training with the overall aims and strategies of the Coalition
- Dissemination seminars on the juvenile justice report.

The Coalition has involved children to only a limited extent as actors in CRC. It disseminated copies of the Convention to children, and, more recently, researched the actual life experiences of children, using the voices of children to tell their own story. For example, in their studies on child labour and children in prison, the Coalition interviewed working children and children in prison. The Coalition has not yet developed materials for professionals working with children on how to encourage and promote children's participation, and it has not yet explored methods of involving children with the decision making and management structures of NGOs and other organizations. It has also not developed activities such as peer counselling by children. Neither has it supported the creation of an organization created by and for children, nor for the promotion of children's participation in local democracy e.g. consultation exercises, monitoring and evaluation of services, and contributing to the development of policy.

The work of local NGOs within the Coalition has made important contributions to implementation of the CRC. Organizations for the Disabled, Child Rights groups, and Child to Child associations, among others, have made important progress in carrying out their mandate for children. For example, the Organization for the Physically Handicapped has been very active in advocating for inclusive education. They used to be a provider organization with a charitable focus, but have grown into the role of advocate. For example, in December Disability Days, disabled children have been very active, giving presentations in schools, and having children from regular schools visit

theirs. They have moved to the forefront from organizations which were very traditional and charitable to one which has children's participation, and which has an advocacy perspective. Crucial to this change has been long term support and discussions with two progressive and rights oriented international NGOs, Radda Barnen, and Oxfam. UNICEF has also encouraged them in this direction. Unfortunately, beyond the five governorates where the Coalition is active, there is almost no non-governmental organization working for the rights of children.

Institutionally, the Coalition faces some challenges. For example, there has been a certain amount of instability in the leadership of the Coalition, and the position of manager is currently unfilled by a permanent staff member. In addition, the Coalition had diversified its funding base very little since its inception and this will eventually pose a problem to its sustainability. The Coalition also suffers from the fact that only a small number of NGOs in its membership have a specific focus on children. Also, at least ten of its NGO members are no longer tenable as NGOs, each having only one or two members. Others are inactive, or exist in name only. This reflects the fact that NGOs in Yemen are still at an early stage of development and many are not stable or productive. In addition, not all member NGOs are actual NGOs, with some retaining strong ties to government, such as the National Women's Union. While the wide diversity of organizations within the Coalition has enriched and strengthened its structure through the debate caused by multiple opinions and modes of working, it has also created some understandable tensions. In spite of the above issues, the Coalition has been able to stay together and move forward an agenda, albeit slowly.

Of all international organizations, the Coalition has its strongest ties with Radda Barnen. Until late 1997, Radda Barnen provided an advisor to the Coalition, and continues to rent office space for them, has furnished and equipped the office, and provides salaries for a secretary and a manager. Since 1997, UNICEF has also funded some of its projects, and the Arab Gulf Program for United Nations Development Program (AGFUND) has purchased computers for the Coalition. The Coalition is also partially supported by membership fees, but these are insignificant.

NGOs Not Belonging to the Coalition

Yemen has a rapidly growing and developing NGO community. It is still quite young in experience, and many are simply a name with minimal track record behind them. However, NGOs represent a new and growing trend in Yemen, and with time, their role is expected to become more dominant. While the National NGO Coalition for the Rights of the Child is the main group involved with child rights activities, a number of other initiatives for children are taking place outside this Coalition.

For example, the Cultural Development Project Planning Foundation (CDPPF), a local foundation, initiated a health education project for girls in 1997. The goal of this project was to introduce girls in the 10-15 year age group to physical and psychological changes which occur during puberty, and to teach them how to use hygienic methods of sanitary protection. Because this topic is sensitive in Yemeni society, it has not previously been properly addressed. The Convention was useful to this project, because it was able to use it to defend its program against criticism. The pilot phase of this project reached a total of 21,311 girls, and full scale implementation will reach many more.

While this activity was stimulated more by interest in women's rights than child rights, it benefited female children in an important way, and a number of aspects of this program could be instructive for the work of the Coalition. For example, its funding strategy was unique and successful, and one which could help the Coalition expand its resource base, i.e., it gained funding from a private company in Yemen which had an interest in improving women's and girls' awareness of personal hygiene because it sold sanitary products for women. Because CDPPF is not linked formally to the Coalition, and there is not presently a mechanism to share experience about NGO programs for children outside the Coalition, such experience can not be used to enrich the mainstream CRC work being carried out. A number of other NGOs with related agendas have also sprung up e.g. the National Society for Women and Children's Health, Soul, the Yemen NGO for Child Rights etc. These should also be brought into the effort, and it appears that this is already the intention of the Coalition.

The Potential of NGOs in Yemen

Yemeni NGOs working on children's issues suffer from the same problems which Yemeni NGOs suffer from in general. NGOs are a young movement in Yemen, and issues of acceptance, competence, and independence from government and from politics plague child oriented NGOs as they do other NGOs. While the situation is slowly improving, significant problems remain, hindering the effectiveness of these organizations.

Illustrative of these problems was an attempt in 1992 to establish the Yemeni Association for the Rights of the Child in Taiz. A conference of the general assembly for this NGO was held in order to elect the executive committee, as required by NGO law. Several hundred people, including agitators, were brought into the hall by opponents of the NGO on the day of the election in order to disrupt the proceedings, and effectively halted the establishment of this NGO.

As the CRC becomes better known, such blatant actions are less likely to be able to be taken against groups organizing around it. The fact that, at the time, child rights was relatively unknown, and the 'human rights' aspect of it aroused the interest and worry of political groups, it became an obvious target for politically motivated acts. However, NGOs are still vulnerable to political and to official interference, and there exist a number of uncertainties regarding NGOs in Yemen, most prominent among them being the law which governs them.

The present law provides insufficient protection for NGOs, and several provisions of the law interfere with the effectiveness of NGOs. For example, only one type of organizational structure can be applied to widely variable types of organizations, NGOs do not have tax exempt status, there is no legal recourse in cases where a license is refused, the rights of NGOs to gain funding from international organizations is uncertain, and many NGOs feel that if they criticize the government, they are less likely to gain a license or be relicensed. A new draft law is currently under consideration, and depending on the exact provisions of this law, NGOs in Yemen may become more or less effective than they are at present. The law governing NGOs is an issue which has drawn international as well as local and national attention and support, and it is expected that by the end of 1998, the chances of a more enabling law being passed will be known.

Since reunification of the two Yemen's, when NGOs began to proliferate due to the expansion of civil society in Yemen, donors have begun to support NGOs. However, because NGOs are a new phenomenon in Yemen, their capacity and experience in implementing programs is limited. It has recently been recognized that international support needs to take the form of capacity building rather than simply providing project funds. The Social Development Fund (a joint government, and multiple-donor funded project) and UNDP are currently in the process of developing programs to provide this type of support, but few NGOs have yet had such support available to them. The National NGO Coalition for the Rights of the Child has been one of the few organizations to benefit from institutional support (from Radda Barnen) to enable them to build up their capacity and ability to operate independently in the future.

UNIVERSITIES

In general, universities in Yemen have shown little interest in and little knowledge of child rights issues. The Yemeni National NGO Coalition for Rights of the Child had attempted to include Sana'a University in some of its activities, but was largely unsuccessful. There are scattered examples of exceptions to this rule, but in general, the potential of the universities have not been tapped. One exception can be found in Taiz University, the School of Education. This faculty has opened an Educational Psychology Department, and within that offers three courses dealing with child psychology, i.e., general psychology, adolescent psychology, and abnormal psychology. Textbooks for all three courses have been written by the Yemeni head of this department, and contain significant references to child rights in a Yemeni context. They have been published in 1998, and are written for general as well as student populations. Another example is the Empirical Research and Women's Studies Department at Sana'a University. Although it has no specific focus on children, it has used the CRC as a way of lending legitimacy to some of the issues it has taken up e.g. modifying the personal status law, referred to earlier. Government plans to establish a Social Welfare Department at the Faculty of Education of Sana'a University have not yet materialized.

MEDIA

Media attention to the signing of the Convention was minimal, being only briefly covered on television and the newspapers. Since then, however, the media has been the focus of awareness raising workshops sponsored by Radda Barnen, the Yemeni National NGO Coalition for Rights of the Child, and UNICEF, especially since 1996. However, the media remains weak in its coverage of children's issues, and in its knowledge of the CRC. In general, media in Yemen has not yet played a large role in educating the public on the CRC, despite a media policy which strongly emphasizes the importance of targeting children. There are a number of reasons for these weaknesses, only some of which reflect weaknesses in the media itself.

Government media channels in Yemen are radio, television, and newspapers. Private media channels are newspapers and magazines. The printed media occasionally covers issues related to children, and in more recent years has begun to cover events and issues related to the CRC, primarily in response to media awareness raising activities of the Yemeni National NGO Coalition for Rights of the Child. There are no Yemeni children's newspapers or magazines, nor any newspapers or magazines devoted to the CRC. One of the activities of the Yemeni National NGO Coalition for Rights of the Child has been to keep track of articles of the printed media devoted to children's issues. The Coalition has noticed a marked increase in articled related to children since it began its awareness raising workshops for the media.

National statistics on exposure to media exist only for women. A 1991/92 survey (CSO, Pan Arab Project for Child Development, Macro International, 1994) found that women who watched television, listened to radio and read newspapers weekly were 37.1, 34.0, and 8.2% respectively. In urban areas, the percentages were 82.6, 57.7, and 28.4%, and in rural areas, the percentages were only 26.8, 28.6, and 3.6% respectively. It is probable that rural children, like rural women, would have lower exposure than urban children to all forms of media.

Within the media, weaknesses relate to lack of financial resources and to lack of trained staff familiar with children's programming. According to a draft report by UNICEF on Media and the CRC (Abbas, 1998), while both radio and television have departments of women and children, they do not have a strategy for children, and no staff specializing in child psychology or children's programming. For radio, only one member of the staff had ever taken a course on children's programs. In addition, the budget is very limited, and this department has no special budget to carry out special children's programs. The department does not even possess a microphone, and their resources are less than those of other departments.

The 1995 Alternative Report to the UN Committee reported that there are only 165 minutes a week of total broadcasting time for children, and that the quality of this program is too low. The Director of Programs justifies the lack of sufficient program time for children by the observation that children do not usually stay tuned to the radio for long periods at a time. This opinion is not shared by others within the Ministry of Information, who report that children constitute a significant listening audience for radio.

Despite the obvious problems with radio programming for children, there is some evidence that such programming has improved somewhat in recent years. A study carried out for the purposes

of comparing the content of radio programs for children in 1989 with those of 1997 showed that there has been some positive change in these program, i.e., they have moved from a concept of children as passive receivers of their parents' instruction to children as participants (field study results, 1998). The programs reviewed from 1989 contained direct instruction to children in matters of health, education, personal guidance and general information. The program was presented in the form of direct instruction and guidance, or in the form of examples taken from Islam or the Yemeni cultural heritage such as "popular proverbs." This last method probably had a stronger influence and was more convincing. Each program had three parts: health, education and general information.

- Health issues: good practices in nutrition, the importance of nutrition, types of foods, hygiene, etc.
- Educational issues: friendship, respect, obedience to parents, respect of elders, etc.
- General information: details of human anatomy, e.g., the brain and the eye, and the importance of each and how to protect them. Other subjects were educational methods and children's books, the wisdom of elders and listening to their point of view about what they think is important for children.

In contrast, the 1997 programs used psychology, and brought in subjects to challenge the child's imagination in the form of stories. They featured the participation of real children in presenting the programs and the use of letters from children in the segment "with friends." Children participated during the program in exchanges with the program family in solving riddles and giving their opinions at many points in the programs. In this way the child was an indirect participant in presenting the program. He/she had the right to express an opinion (CRC Article 13, which includes the child's right of expression), and the program also positively addressed the development of the child in the family (CRC Article 5). In addition, the Director of Programs demonstrated his comprehension of CRC in the adult program, "Discussion of Hope" which clarified some concepts of CRC for adults.

For Sana'a television, there are only two staff in the Women's and Children's Department, i.e., the director and the announcer. There are three Yemeni weekly programs devoted to children, i.e., Jeel Al Ghad (Tomorrow's Generation), which is a 30 minute program devoted to younger children; Sebak al Awail (Competition of the Best), a one hour program targeting youth; and Nadi al Asdiqa (Friendship Club), a 45 to 60 minute weekly program targeting children. Other daily programs for children are primarily foreign cartoons and various other children's programs. The 1995 Alternative Report showed that only 6.4% of television programs are devoted to children.

In 1997, one positive development was the initiation of a study on children and television viewing, by the Ministry of Information, entitled, "Television and Children's Programs." This study, which interviewed mothers and children in Sana'a and Aden, found that mothers, in general, want something more informative and beneficial for their children than cartoons, which is what they perceived their children watched the most on television. This study also involved children by asking them directly what they wanted in terms of television programming. This study was important in that it involved children themselves in the evaluation of programs. It needs implementation follow-up, however, if the results of the study are to be used.

Another positive development, this time on Channel 2, Aden television, was the Children's Day of Broadcasting which took place on December 14, 1997, in celebration of Family Day. This program, carried out by Aden television's Children's Corner, was stimulated by discussions with Radda Barnen on how to let children themselves decide the programs for this day, and to express themselves as advocates of their own rights, rather than having adults speak for them. Through this program, 30 school children were trained for a week on how to use video cameras and microphones, and on basic interviewing techniques. They prepared a program in which children expressed themselves to the public about their problems and feeling about adult treatment, among other things. They included children living in normal circumstances as well as children with special needs and those living in especially difficult circumstances such as working children, blind children, poor returnee children living in Basitin camp, physically disabled children, and street children. This initial effort, which allowed children to speak on their own behalf, led to further programs of the same type during the following month in Ramadhan.

Weaknesses in media coverage of CRC-related topics are also due to factors outside the media itself. There is a general misinterpretation of the media's role as being the producer of all programs for children. Given that the media does not have a budget which would allow it to prepare special programs, or to buy ones of high quality, it relies partially on other sectors to prepare these special program for it, or to fund them. It can manage low budget programs such as those which are interview based, but specialized programs such as drama are usually outside its means. The focus of CRC-related groups attempting to influence the media thus far has been to carry out education and awareness raising workshops for the media. This has been important, as it provides the media with the needed information to focus on children more, and in a way which is appropriate. However, it is not sufficient. Child rights, as a special topic, will require sustained public awareness messages, not only occasional programming and news coverage. For this to take place, it will require professional knowledge of how to reach the intended targets for behaviour change. Even in the West, such campaigns are usually produced and paid for by organizations interested in the topic of the campaign. Such campaigns may require the help of psychologists, for example, and technical media expertise which is not currently available in Yemen.

Thus far, international aid organizations as well as local NGOs and government have not funded or created CRC media campaigns, with the exception of UNICEF, which has been very active in creating health related messages such as for immunization. Where such campaigns have been attempted, they have been very successful in changing public opinion. UNICEF plans on beginning a project in its next country program to promote children's culture and media, which may partially address this gap.

REGIONAL LINKS

Yemen is linked to other CRC efforts in the region through the Regional Networking for Children's Rights NGOs in the Arabic Speaking Countries set up for Arabic speaking countries in the Middle East and North Africa Region. This program is jointly organized by the Arab Resources Collective (ARC), and Radda Barnen. The program's objective is to promote the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to support its implementation in the Arab World. It seeks to promote the mutual exchange of information and experiences, learning and mutual support. In the countries included in this network, the Arabic language is the main bond between them, with the Islamic religion also an important, although not universal, link. Many also share characteristics such as economic hardship, gender inequality and high population growth.

Each year, as part of its program, a regional workshop is held on a relevant topic. For example, in 1996, non-discrimination and children's rights in Arab countries was the topic of the workshop. Regional Consultation meetings are also held annually in order to prepare for the next workshop. Each year, since 1995, members of the NGO Coalition have been attending these workshops and regional consultations, and has found them valuable as ways to expand awareness and information regarding the CRC. Yemen also has a valuable experience to share with other countries

The first regional meeting was held in 1993, followed by annual workshops in 1994, 1995 and 1996. The Yemen NGO Coalition joined from May 1995 and were the hosts for the June 1996 regional consultation meeting. It was the only country in the region who could invite members from all the countries in its membership because its political situation allowed such association. Regional cooperation for children by government has taken place through the Motherhood and Childhood Councils which have been established throughout the Arab world. However, this is not specifically CRC related; rather it relates to children in general, and coordination is not ongoing.

CHILDREN SPEAKING UP FOR CHILDREN

Children speaking up for their rights and needs is still a new endeavour, with relatively few activities taking place along this line. Three of note, however, are activities of the Child to Child Associations operating in Taiz, the Children's Day of Broadcasting in Aden, and advocacy activities of the associations of the disabled. One of the few NGOs or other institutions which actively involve children are the Child to Child Associations. These organizations exist in Taiz and Aden with activities extending to Hadramaut, Abien and Lahej as well, covering 85 schools, and 97,000 students. Approximately half of these students are girls. The Taiz Child to Child Association was founded in 1994 by teachers in Taiz, and is especially active in those schools whose staff founded it. It collaborates with Radda Barnen as well as a number of other local and international funders and NGOs. This organization encourages 6-18 year old children from eight different schools to interact and communicate with their communities and society, and to take responsibility for themselves, their society and their environment. It follows the model of child to child associations throughout the world.

One of the important activities children have engaged in through this organization is a campaign to alert children to the dangers of carrying arms and playing with explosives. Groups of children carried out surveys on the carrying of arms in their neighbourhood, and arranged lectures on the topic. Other important work has been to form effective and democratic school discipline committees where students have a voice in discipline and can find a teacher at fault for misconduct, as well as a child. This is a concept unheard of in other schools. The following case study shows how children from Taiz feel about Child to Child and the CRC.

Case Study: Children's Views on their Participation in the Child to Child Organization and of the CRC

Interviews with boys and girls from seven participating schools in Taiz revealed that Child to Child gives them an opportunity to actively participate in society, and has altered their normal interaction with teachers from passive listener to active learner and partner. While Yemeni NGO law does not allow children to hold positions in the administration of NGOs, children have a major role in planning and carrying out activities of the association. Older children work in teams in planning, organizing and coordinating program activities. Activities are carried out by both the older and younger students, boys and girls. Teachers provide guidance and support, help decide the suitability of project activities, and take responsibility for coordinating with authorities .

A large number of activities have been initiated by children in these schools. Some of the activities these children have carried out are as follows:

Prepared hearing and vision tests, testing primary school girls, and referring those with impairments to specialists.
Carried out a household survey on disabilities, in which 113 children with disabilities were identified.

Prepared a paper on "Playing with Arms and Explosives", the preparation of which involved interviews with the governor, chief of security, the director of the criminal investigation department, and staff in emergency departments, among others.
Attended and participated in the regional seminar held in Sana'a on "Landmines"
Made toys for and played together with children with disabilities.
Participated in the "Future Builders" workshop, a youth workshop put on to assess the needs of development through the eyes of children.

Most children who had participated in Child to Child activities felt that their participation had changed them, and had also changed others around them. The program gave them self confidence, made them more sure about their own abilities, and helped them develop new skills. Some felt that the concept of Child to Child was not new to them, that it was normal in Yemeni society to act as teacher to younger children within ones family. However, they were now practising the concept outside their families, which made it take on a whole new dimension, and gave them opportunities to use and develop their skills in new ways.

Some of the children were thoroughly acquainted with the CRC through their work with Child to Child, while others had heard about it at school or on television, and some had no familiarity with it at all. Of those who knew about it and could evaluate Yemeni government performance on the basis of it, some felt that recent changes in Yemeni laws have been positive, such as giving the right to vote to 18-year-olds, and allowing children to have passports. Others felt that the government was showing a positive attitude by encouraging

activities for children such as sports clubs. A minority felt that there have been no positive changes, and one felt that child rights is a luxury considering the current situation in Yemen.

When asked what they thought important child rights issues were, these children listed child labour, school dropouts, children with disability, and beggars or street children. Many felt that improvement in the situation of children's rights depended on reforming and improving the social and economic situation in Yemen as well as creating political stability. Some children felt that adults were aware that children have rights but they were unwilling to grant these rights because they feared children would become rebellious, and that the adults would lose their authority. Children felt that many adults ignore children's rights, and that they as children can not affect the way adults think. They can only change their own thinking and behaviour towards children. They felt that it takes a long time to change opinions and behaviour, even their own. They also felt that in order to gain the approval and support of adults, the program's awareness sector must involve "children and adults".

In addition to children from the above seven schools, a group of seven boys with disabilities between the ages of 14 and 15, and attending the Institute for Development of the Disabled, a school for the disabled run by the Child to Child organization, expressed great enthusiasm both for Child to Child and the CRC. They were all involved in Child to Child, and knew a great deal about the Convention. They participated in deciding the activities they would be involved in. The walls of their school were plastered with signs and drawings they made as interpretations of the CRC, and they recounted many ways in which their lives had changed since they began school at the Institute, and before they had known of their rights. Before being given the chance to attend the school, their families did not allow them to go into public, in order to protect them. With the opening of the school, and involvement in Child to Child activities with children from regular schools in Taiz, they felt their lives changed dramatically. They participated in plays with these children from the other schools, and through such activities, established ongoing friendships. They felt that they have been accepted by those they have participated with and in this and other ways are now part of society, not isolated as they once were. Through the learning of skills, and the gaining of a general education, they have learned to respect themselves and to be respected in the eyes of others. They feel, though, that they are not yet accepted or their rights respected in general Yemeni society.

The Children's Day of Broadcasting has been described in the section on media. It took place on December 14, 1997, in celebration of Family Day. This initial effort, which allowed children to speak on their own behalf, led to further programs of the same type during the following month in Ramadhan. Other work done by Radda Barnen to encourage children having a voice was advocacy carried out by disabled children themselves. For the December 9 Disability Day which featured one week of activities, they went to schools and talked to school children as advocates for their own cause.

While still rare, individual NGOs have begun to involve children in their own advocacy work. As described in an earlier section, children with disabilities from the Organization for the Physically Handicapped have been very active in advocacy, giving presentations in schools, and having children from regular schools visit theirs. The MoISA/CBR program also actively encourages children to provide suggestions for how to improve the program.

Along the same lines, several studies were carried out in the 1990s which sought the opinions of children about their plight. These are, among others, "The Rights of the Child in Yemen - a Preliminary Evaluation," by Dr. Nadeem Ashuraey (1992), "To be Seen and Heard," by Dr. Sheena Crawford, et al (1998), Television and Children's Programs (1997), and an evaluation carried out in the project areas of the MoISA CBR Project (1997). These studies were sponsored by UNICEF, UNICEF/Radda Barnen/World Bank jointly, the Ministry of Information, and Radda Barnen/MoISA respectively.

Other activities which actively involve children are planned for the future. For example, the CDPPF, an NGO dedicated to development and social change, has designed a School Parliament Project which is expected to be implemented in 1998. The project will provide an opportunity for school girls 15 - 17 years old to represent their age group in schools throughout the country. This project is an effort to encourage a gender-equal mentality toward political participation in general, and to raise awareness about the electoral process and the functions and responsibilities of members of Parliament. General education concerning the rights guaranteed for all citizens by the Yemeni constitution will be given, with an emphasis on women's rights and the need to develop legislation which supports women's interests.

Other than these scattered efforts, there is little opportunity yet in mainstream institutions which encourage self-expression. According to a recent UNICEF report, out of over 2,500 schools in Sana'a governorate, there are only 50 teachers specializing in programs and activities which encourage self expression, e.g., music, theatre, art, sports, and singing. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism has a directorate for Child Culture. However, it is poorly resourced and there are no current plans to upgrade this department. The Yemeni Theatre Institute, also under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, has a very weak emphasis on children. For example, in the last two years, they have not imported any movies for children, and have not put on any theatre shows.

CHILD RIGHTS AND THE WORK OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Radda Barnen

Radda Barnen (Swedish Save the Children) has taken the lead over other international organizations in furthering the CRC in Yemen, especially previously neglected groups. Radda Barnen has as its main objective that "all children are ensured their rights to live and grow up as free, healthy and independent individuals and to enjoy inviolable human dignity." The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the guiding document for its work.

Until 1995, the initial information, education, and advocacy work of Radda Barnen-Yemen in the field of CRC was ad hoc, e.g., support for children's rights posters, occasional television and radio programs, supporting National Children's Day activities, supporting the setting up of a children's corner in the National Library in Aden, etc. These initial activities were seen by Radda Barnen as having a limited impact. During this early period, it also supported the translation and distribution of the full text of the Convention, and the printing of both the government and alternative reports to the UN Committee.

Radda Barnen has used a trial and error approach in identifying durable local partners, both governmental and non-governmental. Radda Barnen had attempted to disseminate the ideas of the Convention through influencing prominent individuals, and through the formation of a National Committee on Children's Rights, which was later followed by the formation of local child rights associations. The direct collaboration between such organizations and Radda Barnen came to an end in 1993 due to differences between these organizations.

Following this experience, Radda Barnen supported SOFD (Sana'a) and the Yemen Psychological Association (Aden) to carry out training and information activities around the issues of CRC. Both these organizations met with other NGOs and individuals in their respective cities . This early network eventually led to the formation of a broader network of NGOs who met initially through the encouragement and support of Radda Barnen. As described in an earlier section, this network compiled an alternative report to the UN Committee. Through the experience of working together on a common issue, members of this network decided that their cooperation should become formalized and permanent. Member organizations decided to form themselves into a national NGO Coalition, and this came into being in March 1995. With the formation of the Coalition, Radda Barnen hoped that longer term, less ad hoc strategies in support of the Convention would be put into place.

Radda Barnen provided much of the initial financial support to the Coalition, as well as encouragement, expertise and the benefit of its experience. Radda Barnen also recruited a planning and management advisor to work with the Coalition. Radda Barnen expected that it would take about a year for this Coalition to establish itself and to gain support from other local and international organizations and individuals, and that Radda Barnen would gradually reduce its support. However, it still remains largely dependent on Radda Barnen for support.

Besides support to the Coalition and other non-governmental groups, Radda Barnen has established links with numerous government bodies and collaborated with them in programming efforts; most

commonly in programs which focus on children in especially difficult circumstances, but also in mainstream issues such as health, and innovative programs such as children's self expression on television. Through such collaboration it has worked in periodic as well as sustained programs on a number of issues not previously tackled in Yemen, including inclusive education, community based rehabilitation (CBR), child labour, and landmines awareness. The six district CBR program, described in an earlier section, deserves special mention. This program, which began in 1993, has developed steadily in size as well as scope, and number of partners. While it was Radda Barnen who initiated the idea for this activity, its approach has been to exist in a supportive role to the MoISA who now clearly "owns" the project, and covers most of the expenses for it. It is based on a sustainable and replicable model, and this pilot has an excellent chance of being replicated in other parts of the country. In addition, it has become the site for a pilot Inclusive Education Project by the Ministry of Education, also supported by Radda Barnen, as well as UNICEF and UNESCO.

Beyond support to governmental and non-governmental organizations, Radda Barnen has also concentrated its efforts on getting both types of organizations to talk to one another. Radda Barnen feels that its support and dialogue with both government and NGOs helped the government to enter into a constructive dialogue with NGOs.

Not all partnerships have been successful or yielded the results Radda Barnen had hoped for. For example, organizations have not been able to organize durable campaigns around single issues such as juvenile justice reform. However, Radda Barnen has made significant inroads in encouraging local initiatives in many areas not previously tackled because of their perceived sensitivity. The following two case studies illustrate the important inroads Radda Barnen has made in advancing the cause of Child Rights in Yemen.

Case Study: Child Labour in Yemen

The problem of child labour became an issue of national concern in Yemen in 1997. Beginning in 1990, after the unification of the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, ever-increasing numbers of children workers began appearing on the streets in major cities. In 1994, the results of the national census included a category of 231,655 workers aged 10-14 years, which totaled 6.5% of all children in that age group. Even more surprisingly, the statistics published in the census revealed that a full 14% of that child labour force is considered "unemployed" (meaning that they are not enrolled in school, have worked previously, and are currently in search of paid employment). Yet apart from documenting the participation of children in the labour force, the Yemeni government took no official notice of the problem for several years.

By 1997 the issue of child labour had reached the level of global debate. In Yemen, through efforts sparked initially by Radda Barnen, the problem was brought to the consciousness of the government and the general public. This was partly through a study on child labour that Radda Barnen funded. It constituted the first serious research produced on the topic. The study revealed that the causes of child labour in Yemen include a disproportionately large number of citizens under 15 years of age, pervasive poverty, inadequate educational opportunities, and the absence of legal restrictions specifically banning or limiting the employment of children.

After initial discussions by Radda Barnen with the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry assumed primary responsibility for the problem of child labour and adopted the issue as a priority. The Ministry took the lead in arranging for a three-day symposium on Child Labour in Yemen (October 6-8) sponsored by UNICEF, WHO, ILO, and Radda Barnen. The symposium was attended by representatives of government organizations, NGOs, labour unions and employers, as well as international organizations. Full-scale media coverage, including airing all of the working sessions on national television, raised public awareness of the seriousness of the problem and the commitment of the government to resolve it. In the wake of the symposium the Yemeni government officially recognized the problem and a national dialogue ensued which continues to the present.

The Child Labour Symposium highlighted the need to document the magnitude of the problem of Child Labour in Yemen, in order to better understand its causes and develop appropriate solutions. Further research is especially needed to examine the nature of the problem in rural areas, as more than 96% of all children working in Yemen exist in rural areas working in agricultural production. Other studies are needed to illuminate the plight of children working within the family, mostly without remuneration, which thwarts their educational and cultural development.

The Child Labour Symposium produced a series of recommendations, among which was a call for the establishment of a National Committee to Combat Child Labour. Under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, the Committee is composed of representatives of various government and non-government agencies (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs, Ministry of Health, the NGO Coalition for Child Rights, the National Council on Population, Trade Unions, the Workers Union, and the Chamber of Commerce). It is working to develop a national strategy, a workplan, and a time frame for completion of activities. Working closely with the International Labour Organization, the strategy it produces will be presented to the Yemeni Parliament and the Cabinet for further action.

The National Committee to Combat Child Labour is considering the problem from various aspects: legal, educational, economic, social, and cultural. It will focus specifically on increasing educational opportunities, implementing effective legislation protecting children, developing media and research programs and projects, and involving the social security network into the solution. Committee members will be encouraged to take appropriate action in their respective agencies.

Case Study: Landmines Threaten Yemeni Children

Yemen has been the scene of numerous wars and factional struggles throughout the present half-century, which have left a legacy of hidden danger in urban and agricultural areas alike. Landmines planted in various regions of the country between the revolutionary war of 1962 and the secessionist war of 1994 threaten the Yemeni citizenry at large but pose the most serious threat to children, who are their most numerous victims. Landmine awareness, detection, and removal, and a total ban on antipersonnel mines are the only means to a definitive solution. Such an effort involves the active participation at all levels of government and the military, working closely with local agencies, international and local NGOs, and the communities in the affected areas. In the nascent Yemeni democracy, interactions between ordinary citizens and top levels of the government and military are still extremely rare. Thus, the efforts of international agencies to encourage and support activism on the local level have been instrumental in placing the landmines issue on the national agenda.

Radda Barnen has led the effort to protect children from landmines in Yemen. Through its work with children affected by the 1994 war, the agency became aware of the landmines problem. Involving the highest levels of the armed forces and military intelligence, the issue was considered to be highly sensitive and beyond the ability of ordinary citizens to resolve. Radda Barnen invited international agencies such as UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDHA (United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs) and the ICRC to a national conference on landmines in April 1995. The conference was attended by Yemeni government agencies such as the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry

of Insurance and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education; as well as non-government organizations like Child to Child, the Scouts, and the Trauma Committee.

In the wake of the workshop, the Mines Awareness Committee was formed. The Committee is composed of representatives from the Yemeni military, other government offices, and non-government organizations. Design, coordination, training and publication sub-committees have been formed to focus on specific tasks involved in developing an effective awareness and removal campaign. The Mines Awareness Committee leads the nation in the development and implementation of training strategies to raise public awareness of the landmines problem in Yemen.

Once the initiative of Radda Barnen brought the landmines issue to the surface, the Yemeni government became actively involved. In November 1997, the President, `Ali `Abd Allah Salih, agreed to host a Regional Seminar on Landmines in Yemen through his own office which was attended by representatives of twelve countries, as well as speakers from Canada, Norway, and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. Regional NGOs dedicated to human rights, landmine survivors and handicapped citizens participated, as well as the major international donor organizations in Yemen.

In December 1997, Yemen signed the International Ban on Landmines in Ottawa, which was later ratified by Parliament on May 12, 1998. According to the ban, the country has pledged to destroy all stockpiled mines within four years, and to clear all existing mines within ten years. On December 16, the Mines Awareness Committee organized refresher workshops to revive the large-scale awareness campaign directed toward children that was first undertaken in public schools in Aden, Abyan and Lahej in December, 1995. Teachers and social workers in the schools were trained to introduce the materials. Techniques of child involvement were adopted in keeping with the guidelines of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including activities of children such as role plays, essays, songs, and poems. The child to child approach was used to reach children not attending school. The planned expansion of the awareness campaign in these and other governorates to include not only teachers but also shaikhs, imams in the mosques, neighbourhood watchmen, and health care workers will ensure that the largest number of children possible are warned about the dangers of landmines.

On March 17, 1998, a national workshop was organized by the Mines Awareness Committee, Radda Barnen, and UNICEF. The main focus of the discussion was how to expand the public awareness campaign to all affected areas, and how to involve the local population in the effort. Citizens from Aden, Abyan, Lahej, Shabwa, Hadramawt, Taiz, Ibb, and Sana'a participated; as did representatives of local government and non-government agencies, international agencies and representatives of foreign governments interested in assisting in the effort. One of the recommendations resulting from the workshop was to form a National Center for the Removal of Landmines, to coordinate local and international activities in this regard.

The landmines problem is a major stumbling-block to development in Yemen. The presence of mines, hand grenades and other explosives in the area earmarked for Free Zone activities as well as in many of the best agricultural lands across the country threatens some of the most promising plans for economic growth. The recurrence of accidents which kill or maim innocent citizens (mostly children) could undermine public confidence in the government. Despite a deep commitment to demining and a resolution to enforce the ban on future use of landmines, the Yemeni authorities are currently hampered in their demining efforts by inadequate detection and safety equipment.

Fortunately, international assistance from a number of countries has been earmarked to support Yemen in this important effort. The US has pledged $5 million toward a five-year program which was scheduled to begin in May of 1998, to equip and train the Yemeni military to detect and remove landmines. Canada, Norway, and Japan have all offered financing. The National Center for the Removal of Landmines will coordinate activities, and will seek to maximize their impact by assigning priorities and avoiding duplication.

The Yemeni military will benefit directly from improved facilities, equipment and specialized training. Spin-offs from the demining program should include the improvement of medical and rehabilitation facilities and support to schools, which will benefit the civilian population as well.

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UNICEF

UNICEF is the United Nations lead agency for children, and as such has a special role in regards to children's rights. In addition, UNICEF is specifically mentioned in the CRC itself. While in many countries, UNICEF has been the facilitator for forming national groups such as NGOs to create a dialogue on child rights, this has not been the case in Yemen. UNICEF-Yemen, however, was the first international organizations to fund a study on the Rights of the Child in Yemen in 1992. At this time, UNICEF-Yemen was one of the only advocates for CRC in Yemen, and initiated a dialogue with the government on the issue. Since that time, however, and until 1997, UNICEF-Yemen adopted more of a needs-based approach over a rights based approach. It is only recently that UNICEF-Yemen has again begun to focus on broad-based child rights issues.

UNICEF-Yemen will be basing its future programming on the CRC much more than it has in the past. In its 1999-2001 Strategy Paper, UNICEF-Yemen states, "The CRC is recognized as an ethical and moral framework as well as a legal foundation in the design of the 1999-2000 country program. During this period, UNICEF will seek to strengthen its role as a critical partner of the government in ensuring that children's rights are met. " Within its strategy, it lists the following strategic considerations:

- Sustainability
- Development of new indicators which take into account the CRC document, and participatory monitoring through a limited set of indicators
- The formation of broader partnerships and alliances in order to promote the CRC. This will include the mobilization of other UN agencies
- Examination and provision of support in relatively poorly understood areas (e.g. child protection, CEDC)
- Broaden the program emphasis to include a wider age-group
- Increased attention to equity and disparity reduction
- A broader participation of stakeholders in planning, implementation and monitoring.
- Enhance the broad dissemination of the CRC
- Strengthening the YCMC to be more active in monitoring child rights
- Support to new areas e.g. children's media

UNICEF will be approaching donors to fund some of its CRC work, and will plan bilateral meetings to discuss this issue. The expected UNICEF/World Bank Child Development Project, funded by World Bank and implemented by UNICEF, focuses heavily on children's health, but attempts to take on broader child rights perspective as well. The focus is on health, education, and cross cutting capacity building. While it focuses mostly on needs, the project falls within the broader government/UNICEF 1999-2001 country program which has a rights perspective. It will also be looking for opportunities to piggyback CRC onto other projects, e.g., adding child rights onto human rights training, or adding a section on CRC into UNDPs planned training of parliamentarians.

UNICEF-Yemen is currently engaged in capacity building through activities such as the training of its staff, the recruitment of a child rights specialist, creating new partnerships such as the Yemeni Council for Motherhood and Childhood, and, for the future, Sana'a University, where it may help

create an academic program for social workers, and otherwise involve departments and faculties of this University in CRC work. It also plans to contribute to the training of partners/counterparts, and to policy development. UNICEF has begun a partnership with one association of lawyers in carrying out a study, "Children in Conflict with the Law." It is also working with al Baraim Society in Aden to hold a workshop on delinquent children in the second half of 1998. Currently, it is working with the MCC to develop a list of indicators to measure the status of children, and are helping them evaluate their work and their organizational capacity.

Project officers in UNICEF-Yemen are required to have read the CRC and to be familiar with the implementation reports. In the information section, a substantial part of the activities supported are related to CRC-advocacy. There remain gaps, however, such as the staff needing a better understanding of how to use the CRC as a programming tool.

One of the most important tools for CRC could potentially be the Situation Analysis carried out jointly by UNICEF, World Bank and Radda Barnen. With two of the three participants of this influential document having strong CRC mandates, the document dealt with the major issues facing children in Yemen. One volume deals with health, a second with education, and a third with children and women in especially difficult circumstances. This third volume, especially, deals with topics previously untouched by situation analyses in Yemen. The study is somewhat limited in that it is not a true rights-based document i.e. its basis is not entirely the articles of the convention. It deals more with children's basic needs than with all rights. However, it does take into account a number of issues of the Convention as well as the concluding remarks of the UN committee. Because it did not cover all CRC articles in its 1997 Situation Analysis, UNICEF-Yemen has asked a team of consultants to initiate a study to show the situation of children in especially difficult circumstances, the role of media in promoting children's culture and disseminating the CRC, and to identify their situation in the Yemeni legislation.

The Role and Potential of Other International Development Organizations in CRC

Other than Radda Barnen and UNICEF, no other international development organization working in Yemen has placed a strong emphasis on child rights. As part of this study, a special survey was carried out in order to look at what commonalities exist among organizations in terms of their interest and activities for children. The goal was to understand how current donor trends relate to children, in order to look for new ways of advancing the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This survey, which targeted 19 bilateral and international donors as well as international NGOs, has shown that there is much untapped potential among the donor community, with varied interest in child rights, but little focus currently on the CRC.

As shown by the following table, aid organizations were asked what they thought were the major donor trends or issues in Yemen, irrespective of whether or not they themselves targeted these issues. The results indicate that there is a general perception that children's issues are not of high priority in development aid overall.

Only two organizations felt that children's issues were among the five most important donor trends, two perceived that child rights was, and two felt that human rights in general figured as a major

issue for international aid. On the other hand, the responses show that the majority of the main trends listed are issues which have a direct or indirect impact on children or include children, e.g., health, economic development, marginalized children.

What International Development organizations believe to be the Five most Important Donor Issues in Yemen

	Top Ten Trends	Votes
1.	Women in Development	10
2.	Health Sector Reform and financing	9
3.	Water Resource Management (including sanitation)	8
4.	Environment and Natural Resources (including hygiene)	7
5.	Economy (including structural reform)	7
6.	Health Care	6
7.	Poverty/Poverty Alleviation, development of social safety net	6
8.	Infrastructural Development (including admin)	4
9.	Reproductive Health/Family Planning/Population Issues	3
10.	Capacity Building (including community level)	3

Trends Directly Related to the CRC

1.	Human Rights (including prisons)	2
2.	Children	2
3.	Child Rights	2

When asked to list the top issues addressed by their *own* organizations, children and youth *did* emerge among the top ten issues they target, even though they do not see these issues to be of major interest to other donors. Four out of 19 donors listed children to be a major issue targeted by their organization. Like the answers to the first questions, the majority of the main issues development organizations listed are those which affect children in some way, even though they do not directly relate to children .

These results differ from the UNDP Yemen development report results (UNDP, 1996). That report measures the importance of donor trends in terms of dollars, and lists economic management, administrative development, agriculture, natural resources, and health to be the main donor trends in Yemen. The present survey, in contrast, looks at the area of focus of each organization regardless of the size of the financial contribution of that organization.

Five Most Important Issues Targeted by 19 International Organizations

	Issue	Targeted by:
1.	Health	11 organizations
2.	Women and Development, gender	6 organizations
3.	Institutional Strengthening and sustainability	5 organizations
4.	Water	4 organizations
5.	Natural Resources and the Environment	4 organizations
6.	Children & Youth	4 organizations
7.	Human Rights	3 organizations
8.	Democracy/good governance	3 organizations
9.	Vulnerable, excluded, marginalized groups incl. refugees	3 organizations
10.	Economic Reform	3 organizations

An interesting finding from the following set of results is that while the majority of development organizations do not perceive children or children's rights as an *issue* per se, 11 out of 19 include children as one of their five most important target groups (see the following table).

Main Groups Targeted by Donors

	Target Groups	Number of Organizations
1.	Women and rural women	9
2.	Children (in general)	7
3.	Government institutions and civil servants	5
4.	Rural and isolated populations	5
5.	The Poor	4
6.	Women of child bearing ages and mothers	4
7.	Urban, and urban marginalized	3
8.	Refugees, especially Somalian refugees	2
9.	Farmers and farmer's organizations	2
10.	The elderly	2
11.	Disabled (urban disabled presently targeted)	2
12.	Children with disabilities	2
13.	Children in difficult social and economic circumstances	2
13.	Children 0-5 years old	2
Total organizations listing children as a main target group		**11**

In addition, 15 out of 19 organizations carry out at least one project currently which targets children. Thus, it appears that "children" is a common theme among donors. This finding suggests that the key to a broader interest in children by such organizations will be to transform children from being a *target group* to an *issue* in and of itself.

Donors with at least one project which targets children
15 out of 19

To recap, "children" or "children's rights" are not themes around which the majority of donors arrange programs, or about which they find commonality. It is not recognized as a common theme in the same way donors recognize "poverty," "women and development" and "health sector reform." However, while child rights/children's issues has not emerged as a major donor theme, a significant number of international organizations focus on children as individual organizations, and the majority of organizations target children in one way or another. This commonality of interest, even though it is not recognized, can serve as a basis for coordination of future CRC work by donors.

The needs of children are many and diverse. Yet, as shown by the following results, the majority of projects for children address a limited number of articles of the Convention. In addition, projects are confined to a limited number of geographic areas, with rural areas especially underserved. There are many issues related to children and to the CRC which are not touched at all by donors, despite there being many local organizations that have the capability for carrying out or sponsoring activities on such issues. For example, the Supreme Committee for Human Rights, and the Yemeni Council for Motherhood and Childhood both represent potential avenues for action, yet neither receive significant donor support. (The MCC may soon receive significant support from UNICEF.) Both these organizations have possibilities for carrying out child rights activities such as working for the rights of orphans, and for children in especially difficult circumstances. In addition, the National NGO Coalition for the Rights of the Child as well as other NGOs which carry out programs for children are logical targets for development aid. For example, a School Parliament Project for girls which relates to articles 12 and 13 was piloted by local NGOs, and could expand nationally if the funds were available.

Number of Development Projects Supporting Specific Articles of the Convention

	Articles	Projects	
1	Definition of child (age inclusion)**	-	
2.	Non-discrimination	-	
3.	Best interests of child	-	
4.*	Implementation of rights by state parties	-	
5.	Parental guidance and child's evolving capacities	-	
6.	Survival and development	-	
7.	Name and nationality	-	
8.	Preservation of identity	-	
9.*	Separation from parents	-	
10	Family reunification	-	
11	Illicit transfer and non-return	-	
12*	The child's opinion	-	
13*	Freedom of expression	-	
14	Freedom of thought, conscience, religion	-	
15	Freedom of association	-	
16	Protection of privacy	-	
17*	Access to appropriate information	-	
18	Parental responsibilities and support	-	
19*	Protection from abuse and neglect	-	
20	Protection of children without families	1	1 organization
21*	Adoption	-	
22	Refugee children	3	2 organizations
23	Disabled children	5	4 organizations
24	Health and health services	27	13 organizations
25*	Periodic review of placement	-	
26	Social security	-	
27	Standard of living	3	3 organizations
28	Education	6	5 organizations
29	Aims of education	-	
30	Children of minorities or indigenous people	2	2 organizations
31*	Leisure, recreation and cultural activities	-	
32	Child Labour	2	1 organization
33	Drug abuse	-	
34	Sexual exploitation	-	
35	Sale, trafficking and abduction	-	
36	Other forms of exploitation	-	
37	Torture and deprivation of liberty	-	
38	Armed conflicts	3	1 organization
39	Rehabilitative care	-	
40	Administration of juvenile justice	1	1 organization
41	Respect for existing standards	-	
	Rights of the Child in general	3	2 organizations

* ***Those articles for which there are no projects, but for which there are immediate possibilities for action.***

** ***Some articles such as 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 are touched on by organizations such as Radda Barnen, but these have not been marked because the main point of their projects touches on another article more directly***

One of the reasons international organizations have not addressed a number of the articles of the Convention in the past is that these issues were considered sensitive and not appropriate for donor intervention. However, the sensitivity which once accompanied many of these issues has become less. Good examples of this are the two case studies presented under the section on Radda Barnen. These two issues of landmines and child labour were very sensitive and looked as if they could not be touched. Never the less, they were successfully addressed. Three factors which make just about any of the articles amenable to action presently are the following:

- the new awareness and experience of government in CRC
- governmental and non-governmental organizations which have sprung up around these issues
- the signing by Yemen of the CRC, which legitimizes action in any of these areas

The majority of projects supported by international organizations focus on very young children. This reflects the large number of projects for children in the health field which target under five year olds. Youth, i.e., teens receive only a small amount of attention by donor projects.

Special Groups of Children Targeted by Projects

	Children Targeted	Number of Projects
1.	Under five year old children	18
2.	Socially and economically especially vulnerable children	8
3.	Children with disability	4
4.	All children	4
5.	Newborns	4
6.	Children in armed conflict	3
7.	Secondary school aged children	3
8.	Refugee children	3
9.	Primary school age children	2
10.	Primary school age girls	1
11.	Urban preschool age	1
12.	Male and female youth	1

Results of the survey show that there are few international aid organizations highly focused or knowledgeable about the CRC although most high level staff in these organizations have heard of it. Very few use the CRC in their dealings with government to promote a child-centered agenda. For example, the U.S. Department of State Yemen Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997 gives only about a half page of attention to children's rights (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour, 1998). It does not use the framework of the CRC, but rather speaks in a general way about children's rights. It deals only with health education, child marriage, and female genital mutilation.

Knowledge and Use of the Convention

Number of donors with knowledge of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
19 out of 19

Number of donor representatives interviewed who have received training from their organization on the Rights of the Child

Received training	4
Discussed CRC, handbook contains information, but no training	3
No training or any type of information on CRC provided by organization	12

Number of organizations with Child Rights mentioned in policy statement of organization
6 out of 19 (3 don't know)

Number of organizations which mention the Rights of the Child in their agreement with the Yemeni government
2 out of 19

Number of organizations which speak of Rights of the Child in talks with government bodies
6 out of 19

Number of organizations making its aid conditional on the Yemeni partner taking steps to implement the CRC
2 out of 19

Following the survey, a half day workshop was held with international aid organizations to discuss the results of the survey. It was attended by eight bilateral and multilateral donors, and international NGOs. In this workshop, the possibilities and constraints of these organizations to expand and broaden their support for CRC in Yemen were discussed. An analysis of opportunities and constraints, as well as recommendations came out of this workshop. These were as follows.

Opportunities:

- Some of the organizations had received directives from their headquarters to engage in analyses and projects related to children. This was a positive stimulus to work for children in the context of the CRC.
- The study itself and the subsequent workshop alerted a number of donors to the issue, which had previously been a hidden one, not figuring high on the donor agenda. The fact that there are organizations and resources available in Yemen to help donors in their attempt to focus on child rights has a real potential to turn a vague interest into a field for development aid.
- Most organizations have a certain degree of flexibility in how they focus their aid. With assistance from organizations such as Radda Barnen and UNICEF to understand the issue better, a number of organizations are willing to incorporate child rights into their ongoing activities (e.g., human rights reports), and to engage in new activities related to the CRC. The international organizations have the opportunity of working on many levels and in many ways, e.g., a macro perspective such as pressuring government to give more attention to children's rights, funding projects, or demanding from organizations they fund that their projects are in line with the CRC.

- The CRC itself and the resources engendered to support it such as training packs, and the UNICEF Implementation Handbook for CRC, which contains checklists which are already available create a ready base of information which donors felt they could use to focus their programs.

Constraints:

- Most of the organizations had very little knowledge of the CRC, and of the situation of children in Yemen. As such, they were ill prepared to engage in activities to promote the CRC despite an interest in the issue. International aid organizations listed lack of knowledge as their largest constraint to carrying out CRC related activities. They desired to be educated in the following areas:
  - The CRC itself
  - The situation of children in Yemen
  - Priorities for CRC activities in Yemen
  - Governmental and non-governmental organizations engaged in CRC activities
  - Ongoing activities in CRC in Yemen and
  - How to incorporate CRC into their programs, and what activities to engage in
  - How to design and evaluate projects for their impact on children e.g. checklists
- Some organizations work jointly with other donor organizations which have mandates difficult to resolve with the CRC. This limits the potential of these smaller organizations to create CRC based approaches.
- Organizations often have multiple mandates, and it is difficult making one issue a priority. Pushing an issue such as CRC within an organization requires having a person within that organization to push it in order that it becomes a priority. Organizations often do not have the people to this, creating time conflicts.
- Larger donors often have set mandates from their headquarters and only have a small amount of room within which to manoeuver for CRC.
- Smaller organizations such as international NGOs have more flexibility, but they feel too small to make an impact on their own. They have often been excluded from donor debates and coordination meetings due to their size.

CONCLUSIONS

It is not an easy matter to evaluate the effect of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Yemen, nor the effectiveness of institutions in implementing the Convention. As measured from the point of view of institutions built up around the issue, public awareness, and budgetary support for the issue, the effect can be said to be modest. From the point of view of the overall situation of children, the effect of the Convention has been mixed. While its existence has been instrumental in drawing attention and giving legitimacy to the rights and needs of special groups of children such as orphans, children with disabilities, children in prison, working children, refugee children, and to some extent the poor and the girl child, there is not yet any evidence that the situation of the majority of these children has improved significantly. At the same time, since Yemen ratified the Convention in 1991, a number of standard indicators on children have shown either stagnation or decline. For example, enrolment rates of girls in basic education has stagnated, immunization rates have fluctuated up and down, and malnutrition has actually increased. This does not of course mean that the effect of the Convention has been negative, only that other more powerful factors have been affecting the lives of children as well.

Assessment of the effect of the CRC in Yemen is complicated by the fact that no indicators of achievement were set immediately after the ratification of the Convention, and to date, still do not exist. In addition, since ratification, Yemen has undergone several crises which have affected its budgetary and administrative attention to the CRC, and which have affected children negatively. The most important of these is increasing poverty throughout this decade, which has swollen the numbers of working children, street children, begging children, and others, and decreased the resources available to address these problems.

Also complicating measurement of progress is the fact that there is often a long lag between identification of an issue, awareness raising around that issue, devising strategies and policies, implementation, and finally evaluation of programs. In the continuum between the identification of an issue and program evaluation, many steps have to take place. Yemen needs but has not yet set measures to define progress, not only measures of final outcome.

In general, however, it is possible to conclude that institution building and the effectiveness of programs related to the CRC is proceeding in a positive direction in Yemen, but not yet in an organized, even or rapid fashion. The following "report card" is an attempt to assess how far Yemen has come in implementing the CRC.

Report Card on Governmental and Non-governmental Action Related to the Convention on the Rights of the Child*

Achievement	*Government*	*Yemeni NGOs*
Harmonizing National Policy and Law with the CRC	Beginning	N/A
Implementation of Laws and Policies Concerning Children	Partial	N/A
Advocacy on Behalf of Laws and Policies Concerning Children	N/A	Ad hoc
Systematized Data Gathering on Children	Partial	No
Creation of Permanent Government Institution to Promote and Monitor Children's Rights	Inadequate	N/A
Creation of Ombudsperson/Other Independent Institution to Promote and Monitor Children's Rights	No	N/A
National Strategy for Children Consistent with the CRC	Partial	No (only an organizational strategy)
Adhering to Reporting Guidelines and Timelines	Partial	Partial
Coordination of Policies Affecting Children	Beginning	Partial
Promotion of Convention	Beginning	Yes
Participation of Children in Policy and Programming	No/almost none	Beginning

* ***Ratings:*** ***Yes, No/almost none, Partial, Incomplete, Beginning, Inadequate, Ad hoc***

The institutional ability of government and non-government organizations to further implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is dependent on their overall capacity. In Yemen, the capacity of both types of institutions is not highly developed. The civil service and a number of sectoral ministries are now going through a process of reform, in recognition of the fact that they contain a number of inefficiencies which do not allow them to reach their goals with the budget they have available. Similarly, NGOs are a new phenomenon in Yemen, and their ability to carry out projects and campaigns is still being developed. Add to this the fact that there are no traditions built up around Child Rights in Yemen means that institution building will be a major task for implementing the CRC for some time. It will not be a simple matter of creating projects and departments within already well oiled institutional machinery.

This, as well as the fact that budgets are inadequate, does not serve as an excuse for Child Rights to not be adamantly pushed forward no matter what the capacity of institutions or the budgets available. The Convention specifies that the government is obligated to implement the CRC *to the best of its ability*, and only then to ask for international support. In fact, the major changes now taking place in government and in the laws governing NGOs require a strong lobby by CRC advocates in order that reform strategies take children into account. For example, the cutting of budgets and of civil service staff should be carried out in such a way that programs which target children, such as primary health care, girls' education, and social services for children be protected. This in itself is an opportunity to lobby for children.

What the low institutional capacity does mean is that proposed programs will need to be analyzed within the overall context of the capacity of the institutions which will carry them out. Expecting a department of a ministry which implements some aspect of the CRC to be more efficient and unconstrained by bureaucracy than the rest of government is not realistic.

Above and beyond those tasks listed in the above "report card," one special issue of both governmental and non-government organizations which has not yet been adequately tackled is that of changing public opinion in regards to children. The cultural ideal of a child who listens with respect to authority, is "seen and not heard," works without complaint assisting the adults in the family, and who matures early to take on the responsibilities of adulthood, denies children the chance to develop their full capacity. In addition, the underlying attitude that children are not people in their own right, but rather are "owned," in a sense, by their father, works against achieving their rights. Despite the signing of the Convention, the predominant perspective of society, government institutions, and NGOs towards children, particularly towards children in especially difficult circumstances is one of charity, not rights. This has only recently begun to change, and within limited organizations, e.g., the MoISA/Radda Barnen CBR Program, Child to Child Associations, and Societies for the Handicapped.

These underlying attitudes are amenable to change, and can change, just as they have begun to in the West, but it takes, among other things, a concerted effort using mass media and other means. In addition, it requires the provision of basic government services, and legal reform which allow the public to heed these messages. For example, in order for people to educate their children, they need both to believe that it is important, and to have educational services available to them. In order for children not to be deprived of their mothers at an early age, women will need a stronger voice in attaining their legal right to their children in the case of divorce. In order for the child with disabilities to be accepted in society, he/she must be given opportunities to demonstrate his/her potential and abilities through access to schooling. The two efforts of changing public opinion, and providing opportunities to exercise better treatment of children must go hand in hand.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Government:

1. Government needs to develop clear guidelines, policies, institutions and strategies which can carry out the essential tasks related to the CRC, i.e., monitoring, implementation, reporting, coordination, and promotion. The present institutions can only carry out these tasks partially due to organizational, budgetary and technical weaknesses. The MCC is a logical body to take on the central task of promoting the CRC. However, its weaknesses need to be corrected before it can play an effective role. With the exception of the very last recommendation, the recommendations to strengthen this body are the same as those listed in the 1998 UNICEF analysis on capacity building of this organization (Namazi, 1998). These are:

- Elevate the status of the Council with the President or the Prime Minister chairing the Council. Ministries should be represented by Ministers.

- Clearly define roles so that the ministries see the Council as a bastion of support and a facilitator for their mandates. The role of the Council should be to set policies and goals, monitor progress and facilitate cooperation, coordination and collaboration. Operational matters and programme implementation should be left to the ministries and to NGOs.

- Strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat with a small number of highly qualified professional staff, by strong leadership, and by independence, drawing on a modified Social Development Fund model, and using UN local salary scales to draw and keep good qualified staff in the Secretariat. The staff supporting the work of the Council must be of a high degree of competence professionally.

- "Motherhood" should either be removed from the name of the Council, and it becomes the "Yemeni Childhood Council," or two separate sections should be created, one for motherhood and one for childhood, so that programming agendas will be clear.

2. Specific recommendations regarding the tasks for implementation of the CRC by the MCC are as follows. For all these recommendations, it is assumed that the MCC has been strengthened according to the above points.

- Monitoring of Implementation: The MCC needs to set a limited list of time bound targets, and evaluate its progress against them annually. Basic indicators should be established in agreement with the Central Statistical Organization and the ministries responsible for carrying out different aspects of the CRC. At a minimum, these indicators should be published annually by the ministries, and every five years by the CSO. This monitoring must necessarily differentiate between urban and rural, and male and female attainment of rights.

- Monitoring of Events related to Children: The MCC should identify key arenas for events which affect children e.g. Parliament (upcoming legislation), the media, Ministry of Finance (government budgets), and other key ministries. A special watchdog office should

be set up to detect events early which could adversely affect children, or which are in contradiction to the CRC.

- Implementation: This should be the responsibility of individual ministries. The MCC, however, should identify articles of the Convention which require activities for which there are no current government institutions or facilities to implement those activities, and establish these bodies, e.g., juvenile courts, alternatives for girl orphans such as family care etc. The MCC should also study and identify special strategies for all articles of the convention for reaching girls, and rural children.

- Reporting: The MCC, if properly strengthened, should take on this responsibility. Technical training and assistance in compiling the report should be sought from interested donors.

- Promotion of the CRC: A special government budget should be sought specifically for promotion. Promotion should include promotion to government bodies as well as to the public, especially children. The goal should be to make the Convention generally known among government at national, governorate and local levels. Special effort should be made to target those government leaders and other staff who interact with children, or who make decisions which affect children. In terms of the public, media campaigns should be orchestrated in coordination with service provision. Such campaigns will need special funding, and to be attached to specific goals. In addition, opportunities must be sought to integrate promotion and awareness raising into regular government channels, especially schools. The government needs to establish indicators regarding promotion and measure its progress against this annually.

- Coordination: Coordination between government bodies will need to have a clear benefit for the individual bodies involved or a clear purpose in terms of the CRC if it is to succeed. All coordination efforts should be attached to clear and achievable goals.

- Involving Children in Policy and Programming: The MCC should study effective and implementable ways to incorporate children's views into all aspects of the programming process. One possibility is to have child representatives on the MCC; another is to establish guidelines for different ministries on how to incorporate children's views into their ongoing planning, and to then formally monitor the adherence to such guidelines.

3. Concurrent with the strengthening of a government body such as the MCC to provide a comprehensive framework for implementation of the CRC, a second, more flexible structure should be set up to deal with special issues and problems related to the implementation of the CRC. This structure should be in the form of a multidisciplinary and multi-organizational working group. This working group should follow the model used for the highly successful Landmines Awareness Campaign. It should be a high level permanent working committee whose membership changes based on the issues being addressed. This broad based coalition should be composed of interested and competent NGOs, government officials, international organizations, and technical experts.

It should exist under the auspices of government, but pull in the other groups. As it is an informal dynamic group, it should first be placed under the auspices of a personality in government who has shown a high commitment to rights of the child. Alternatively, it could exist under the ombuds office.

4. Ombudsperson: An ombuds office should be set up to look after questions which affect the rights and interests of children. This office should pay special attention to whether the laws and their regulations and their applications are conforming to the CRC. To advise, on the basis of this, on changes in laws, procedures and practices which would improve services provided to children, and the situation of children. This can either exist within government or be independent.

5. Legal Services for Children: Special attention should be given to establishing an office to receive and investigate offences against individual children, e.g., in schools and in the courts.

Yemeni NGOs:

The National NGO Coalition for Rights of the Child could strengthen their organizational capacity and effectiveness through the following:

- Identify new NGOs which carry out programs and activities for children, and encourage them to join the Coalition.
- Identify rural and urban NGOs in governorates and geographical areas not presently reached with child rights activities, and take special measures to encourage and support their participation in the Coalition.
- For each activity engaged in, pinpoint special strategies for reaching rural children, and girls.
- Establish mechanisms to involve children more in policy and programming.
- Formalize and professionalize a number of the tasks of implementation of the CRC, either by designating particular NGOs to take on that task or establishing technical offices with paid staff i.e. ongoing monitoring of progress, monitoring of events, lobbying, awareness raising, and ombuds services.
- Encourage the formation of NGOs which are specifically child focused.
- Network with other NGOs, and create awareness among them about rights of the child.
- Provide them with tools to evaluate their programs in terms of child rights, e.g., evaluation checklists.
- Make special efforts to diversify the resource base by special fund raising efforts and identification of sponsors, possibly by establishing a fund raising unit.
- Strengthen cooperative activities for CRC at the governorate levels.

International Development Organizations

1. General recommendations coming out of the Donor Survey Workshop carried out for this study were to, at a minimum, do the following:

- Distribute the UNICEF/World Bank/Radda Barnen Situation Analysis of Women and Children, and hold a workshop around it in order to educate international aid organizations about the situation of children.

- Present the findings of this study to international aid organizations.
- Carry out a training workshop for interested donor organizations on CRC in Yemen with the help of a CRC expert.

2. Other possible joint actions identified in the workshop were to:

- Hold a workshop in which governmental and non-governmental organizations working for CRC presented their activities to international aid organizations, i.e., a CRC project fair, or simply a workshop.
- Incorporate CRC into ongoing donor forums, e.g., the donor coordination committee for democracy and human rights.
- Develop a simple CRC checklist for design and monitoring of the impact of projects on children in Yemen.

3. Other recommendations which can be implemented either on an individual or joint basis are:

- Donors should involve children during monitoring and design of projects, e.g., survey them to attain their opinions on projects which involve them or impact on them.

- There are many parallels between CRC and gender, and some of the same techniques used to promote gender may be able to be used to promote CRC, e.g., checklists to make sure projects are "child sensitive" just as projects now must be gender sensitive. However, these tools such as checklists work imperfectly, and the experience with gender should be looked at carefully.

- Organizations can put into place policies and strategies at the local level. Even without mandates from headquarters, putting in place these policies will enable the local office to pursue child rights issues into the future.

- Organizations can have more effect if they work together, but many, especially smaller NGOs, have not been brought into the development dialogue. There is a need for working jointly, and for communicating periodically through donor meetings or similar forums, or setting up a working group for CRC.

- The Yemeni government should be the major target of donor activities, because the onus of implementing the CRC is on governments. However, targeting by donors should not mean simply funding. International organizations should make a concerted advocacy effort for the CRC. One way they can show government their commitment to Rights of the Child is to hold a conference on the subject. A steering committee for donor/government coordination could also be set up, which is a more focused way of organizing between donors and government.

- Because donors often support government institutions which do not themselves provide support for CRC to the best of their capacity, donor support thus often becomes a substitute for government action This dilemma can be met by articles of the Convention that specify that the government is obligated to implement the CRC to the best of its ability, and only then to ask for international support.

General

- All organizations need to encourage a general child rights perspective in much in the same way that a gender perspective is now encouraged across the board for projects and programs. This can be done through awareness raising, through the devising and use of checklists, and through lobbying. The fact that so much of development aid as well as government policies and programming affects children directly or indirectly creates a strong argument to devise such checklists.

- Education institutions such as the public school systems and the universities need to be special targets of child rights programming. This is because this is the institution which directly affects and accesses the largest number of children, and the largest number of professionals who work with children. Important measures to be considered are incorporation of the Convention in the curriculum, and the training of a professional cadre who works with children in especially difficult circumstances such as orphans, juvenile offenders, children in prison, children with disability, and the poor in general.

- Promotion of the CRC needs to be professionalised, and sustained public awareness campaigns need to take place. The media should be supported through the provision of technical expertise, through ongoing promotion and awareness raising regarding the CRC, and through the supplementation of budgets.

- When promoting child rights, it will be important to speak of children and *youth*, or of "children between birth and eighteen years of age." The word "children" does not describe to most people the full range of children between birth and 18 years of age, and leads to misinterpretation of the scope of child rights.

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Child to Child, Taiz, Group of 18 male and female intermediate school students from seven schools in Taiz
Child to child, Taiz, Group of 7 14-15 year old disabled boys from the Institute for Development of the Disabled, Taiz
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Saleh, Rahma Mohammed, coordinator, Taiz, National NGO Coalition for the Rights of the Child
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Seel, Lieutenant Colonel Ted, US Army
Seymour, Dan, Save the Children Fund, UK
Shaikh, Dr. Salih, Assistant Representative, UNFPA
Shenaif, Hasiba Yehia, Director of Women's Department, MoISA
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